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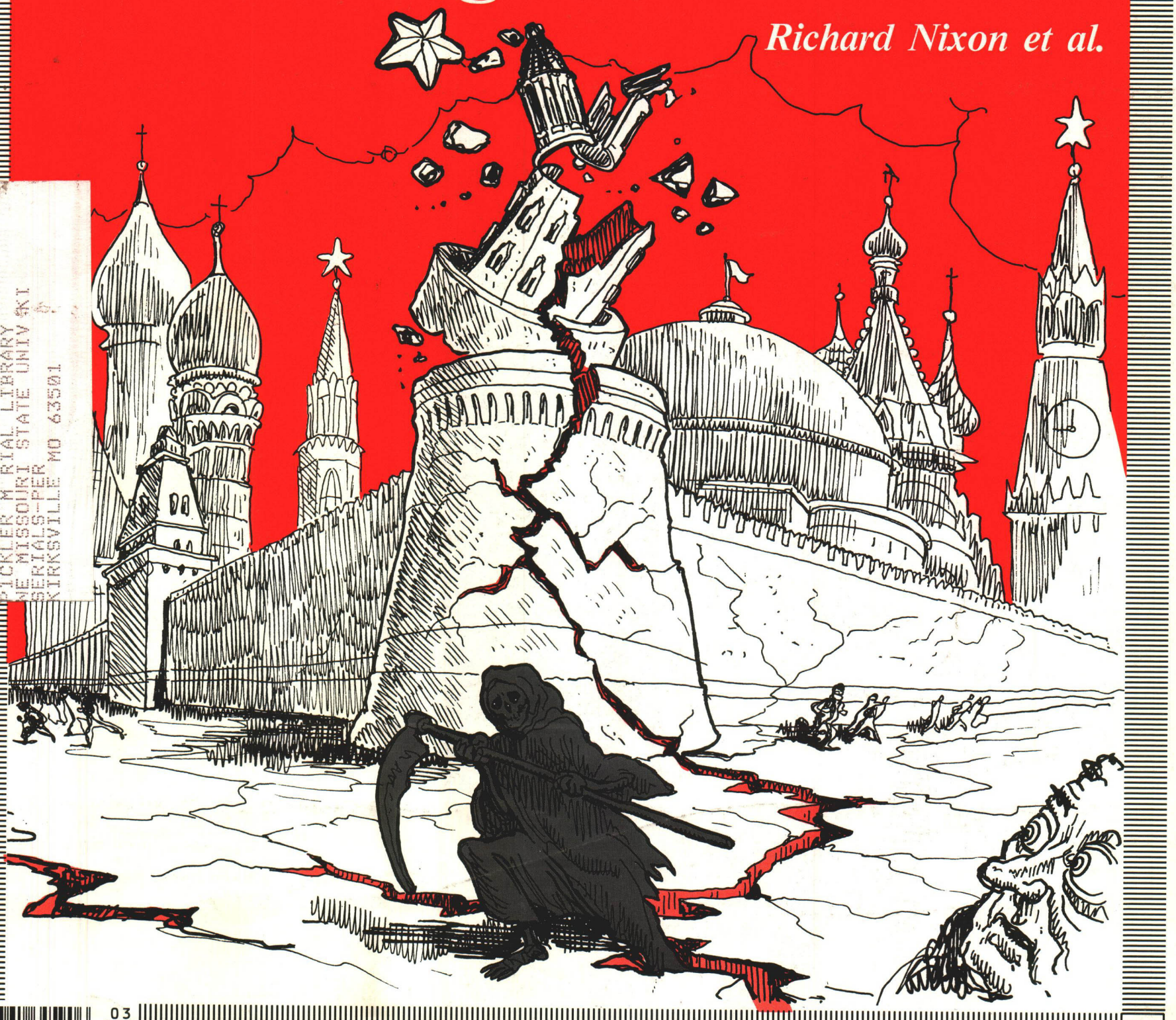

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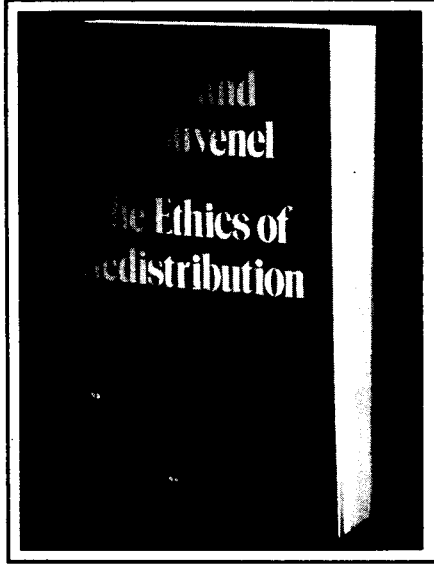

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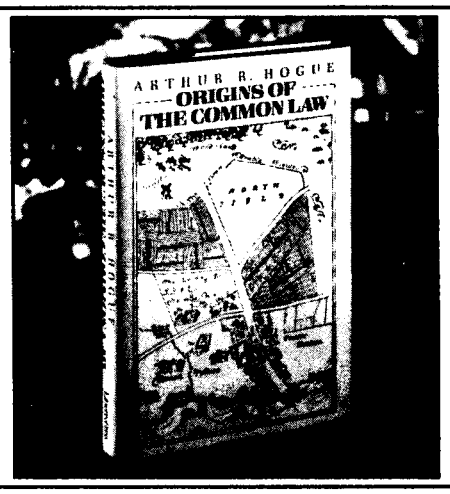

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■ Israel is a leader in the fields of medical electronics, military electronics, civilian and military aviation, agri-technology, telecommunications, computerized graphics, fine chemicals, solar energy, water desalinization, and computer hardware and software. Traditional industries include food processing, textiles and fabrics, furniture, fertilizers, rubber, plastic, and metal products. The highest growth rates are in those branches that require heavy R&D investment, advanced engineering and sophisticated production techniques.

■ Israel is the acknowledged world leader in the diamond industry. It produces over 80% of the world's output of small polished stones. Israel is also the developer and the world leader in the drip irrigation technology of agriculture. Israeli equipment and this technology are now being used with great success in the arid regions of the United States and in many developing so-called "third world" countries (some of which don't acknowledge the "existence" of Israel).

■ Domestic tranquility, a western legal system, the superb university network (centered on Hebrew University in Jerusalem and the Technion in Haifa), the full infrastructure in transport, communications, and utilities, but primarily its educated and motivated population make Israel attractive to foreign industry. They are also aware that the highest level of R&D work is performed in Israel and that it costs around 40% less than in the U.S. Such companies as IBM, Digital Equipment, Intel, National Semiconductor, Motorola and many others have established plants and design and engineering centers in the new industrial parks mushrooming around the country's academic institutions. Israel has a Free Trade Area agreement with both the E.E.C. and with the United States, the only country in the world whose goods have preferential tariff reductions and duty-free access to the two most important markets in the world.

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THE CONTINUING CRISIS

• In the first month of the new decade the official Laotian radio broadcast the solemn judgment of millions of adepts of Dr. Marx when it intoned that 1989 was "a nightmare year for socialism." A good point that, and during January the Polish Communist party shed its name and heaved aside the red star from all official stationery. In East Germany former Marxist-Leninist wizard Mr. Erich Honecker was arrested. In Bulgaria the same status befell former Bulgarian leader Mr. Todor Zhivkov; and the Czech government asked Moscow to remove its troops, post haste. On January 29, in Washington, D.C., the Food and Drug Administration drastically limited the use of Red Dye No. 3, yet still there are no changes at the Harvard Law School or in the Cuban Politburo. History cannot be delayed forever, comrades!

• The United States Playing Card Company conferred its annual awards for "best" headlines on four of the nation's most authoritative newspapers, among them the *Sun* for "Grossed Out Surgeon Vomits Inside Patient," the *National Enquirer* for "Politician Gives Birth—To His Twin Brother," the *Globe* for "Man Explodes On Operating Table," and *World Weekly News* for "Bride's Kiss Makes 80 Guests Sick." Quite possibly the awards committee did not have time to evaluate a lulu from the boy editors of *Time*—to wit: "Man of the Decade, Mikhail Gorbachev." Mr. Troy Hayden, son of Manuel Antonio Noriega look-alike Tom Hayden and Miss Jane Fonda, has been arrested in Los Angeles, California, for spray-painting what police call "gang-type" graffiti on The Environment during a nature walk through metropolitan Los Angeles. True to his parents' code of social consciousness, the young moralist was wearing a "Heal the Bay" T-shirt at the time of his arrest, but there is irony here. California Highway Patrol Sgt. Rick Walker further described Mr. Hayden's graffiti as "white gang stuff," and Mother Jane had always raised young Troy to be a person of color. Can it be that in the Republican 1990s this impressionable young man has fallen under the spell of the Republican National Committee and its activist arm, the Ku Klux Klan? There is a whole generation of young Americans out there to be deprogrammed, Tom & Jane!

• The bizarre sociology of New York City continues to supply stories of singular contrast and imbecility. On January 10, an ambulance carrying a critically ill man to Bellevue Hospital was brought to a halt by a laughing deliveryman's double-parked UPS truck. When a friend of the ailing patient pleaded "He's dying, let us through," the deliveryman cracked up. While sirens screamed, the laughing deliveryman "purposely slowed down," according to testimony gathered by concerned UPS officials, and leered lewdly at the disappointed paramedics. Tammany Hall returned to life on January 1, when Mr. David N. Dinkins, the first of the black Irish to be elected mayor of New York since Mayor Jimmy Walker, was inaugurated. Mr. Dinkins arrived in the mayor's office trailing behind him hundreds of favors rendered and thousands of favors sought, not to mention his tricky tax returns, stock deals, classic garbage contracts.

• That New York City remains a vigorous intellectual hub was vividly demonstrated by that legendary hoaxer and teacher at Manhattan's New School, Mr. Alan Abel, who duped much of the Manhattan press into misreporting the winner of a $35 million Lotto jackpot. Mr. Abel's deception set off a stupendous debate among the city's intelligentsia. Mr. Joey Skaggs, formerly of the School of Visual Arts, whose hoaxes include duping a television station into presenting him as "Joe Bones, head of a Fat Squad of diet-enforcers," was moved to depreciate Mr. Abel's work as "a publicity stunt." "It's not complex," averred Mr. Skaggs, who went on to speculate that colleague Abel, despite access to the New School's erudite faculty, may have "run out of ideas." Mr. Abel has defended himself, insisting that his hoax abounds with "social significance" and "nuance"; but at this writing it appears that the New York intellectual community is leaning toward the Skaggs position, though all await Susan Sontag's analysis in the forthcoming issue of the *New York Review of Books*—if there is a forthcoming issue. In these dark days of the Bush Terror no New York egghead knows what to expect next. Think of what the administration did to Noriega, and Noriega, true to the voodoo catechism, always swaddled himself in red underwear.

• And there are more New York tales. Manhattan's assistant district attorney Mr. John F. Kennedy, Jr., who plans a second attempt to pass the New York Bar Association exam no matter what the odds, broke from his onerous studies to fly to Rome, New York, where he solemnized the closing of a local lunatic asylum, comparing it to the dismantlement of the Berlin Wall. Finally, State Senator Martin Connor of Brooklyn has gone before the New York State Senate to demand that magazines bearing "fragrance strips" be banished from the state. "The only hazard New Yorkers should face when opening a magazine is a paper cut, not a migraine headache," attests the enlightened Mr. Connor, whose communications director, Miss Amy Solomon, is "chemically sensitive." Adding momentum to this latest humanitarian drive is that paradigmatic New Yorker, Mr. Richard Zachary, who showed up at a Manhattan hearing on smelly magazines wearing a gas mask. When Mr. Zachary stepped back out on the streets of Manhattan his chances of being mugged, murdered, or sexually molested were greater than were he to walk the streets of Beirut—yet his civic concern is his neighbor's smelly magazine.

• The *Los Angeles Times* reports that dialogue is continuing between Los Angeles police officials and the Nation of Islam to propitiate hard feelings that have steadily worsened since police officers arrested an unnamed Muslim who had stepped into traffic while attempting to sell a bean pie. Muslim-made bean pies are a Muslim specialty item. Anti-Armenian rioting in the southern Soviet republic of Azerbaijan approached the dimensions of civil war, motivating the Kremlin to send the Red Army into action in the province. Feminists shuddered when in Ballston Spa, New York, a Mr. Ronald J. Longo, 45, was convicted of second degree murder for his actions in defending a waitress at the Spa City Diner from the complaints of another customer, the late Mr. William McEntire, who became indignant over a faulty cheeseburger. Mr. Longo killed Mr. McEntire with a knife. Mr. McEntire had wanted lettuce and tomatoes with his viand.

• In a follow-up on a story from last month's "Crisis," Mr. Richard Craft, winner of the *Washington Times*'s coveted Gruesome Murder of the Year Award, was sentenced on January 8 to fifty years in prison for murdering his wife and disposing of the corpse via a wood chipper. Responding to widespread disparagement that he had shown "apparent lack of emotion," the former airline pilot declaimed that "I have feelings like everyone else." On January 17, Washington's controversial Mayor Marion Barry declared that the capital's war on crime was succeeding, twenty-four hours before he himself was apprehended on charges of possession of cocaine at the Vista International Hotel (Room 727). At Harvard University researchers released a thoughtful report discrediting the claim that oat bran is the health food of the decade, though it made no mention of the fact that the stuff tastes somewhat like peat moss. In Tulsa, Oklahoma, the famously callipygous Mr. Darron Anderson, 21, is no longer quite so proud of one of his comeliest assets. Mr. Anderson, who was accused of being one of the two men who robbed Garfield's Restaurant and Pub, has now been identified beyond any doubt by a waitress who recognized his strikingly beautiful buttocks. Further details of the trial are not available, but prosecutor John Kelson asserts that upon seeing Mr. Anderson from behind she "was adamant." In response to queries as to whether Mr. Kelson had also noticed the accused's posterior the fastidious prosecutor replied, "I personally never cast my eyes upon a

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defendant's nether regions . . . but the witness apparently did." Mr. Anderson got five years.

• In Washington Mr. Paul Corbin died, aged 75. Mr. Corbin had the distinction of being an aide and lifetime loyalist to Mr. Robert F. Kennedy, a friend to former CIA Director William Casey, and to *The American Spectator.* He had many other distinctions, some of which could have gotten him before cancer did on January 2. Among the frauds of the old decade to expire was Mr. Baghwan Shree Rajneesh, 58, another Indian guru to die of Rolls Royce poisoning. He once owned eighty-five. Mr. Aldo Gucci, who brought the Gucci label to the U.S., passed on in Rome. The actress Miss Ava Gardner died of natural causes in London, and in Los Angeles Mr. Laurence J. Peter, author of *The Peter Principle: Why Things Always Go Wrong*, died in his sleep. His book sold eight million copies in more than thirty languages, even though after its initial success the amused Mr. Peter insisted that he was only kidding. His was a useful life. *—RET*

CORRESPONDENCE

Horrors

It is with more than mild astonishment that one comes across a rave review of Andrea Dworkin's latest ravings in *The American Spectator* (January 1990), of all places. Having taken pity, evidently, on writers left unemployed by the death of *Ms.* magazine, the *Spectator* now features self-professed feminist Florence King as a frequent contributor. Florence King can scarcely find words to do justice to her admiration for Andrea Dworkin. According to Ms. King, Andrea Dworkin is "a rock-em, sock-em Carrie Nation who has won my admiration and respect." And who, presumably, deserves that of the *Spectator*'s readers as well. Dworkin, in Ms. King's encomium, "rises to Boudicean heights of dignity and fighting spirit." There is much more in the same vein. It all goes far beyond the *New York Times Book Review*'s nominally favorable but rather disgusted review of the same book, whose author was content to praise Ms. Dworkin as "idealistic." Ms. King goes on to express outrage that Dworkin has been subjected to "censorship" in the liberal media, as if this were some kind of rare event (George Gilder, please call home). According to Ms. King, by opposing pornography, Ms. Dworkin has become "conservative" but just doesn't know it yet.

Now, to anyone who has followed Ms. Dworkin's career, all this is (to put it mildly) somewhat problematic. There is a very good reason why publications, including left-liberal ones, should refuse to publish Dworkin: her stock-in-trade is to describe the male sex in terms that make Hitler's characterizations of Jews look respectable and rational. It is not censorship to refuse to print such characteristic Dworkinisms as the following, wholly typical example: "Men love death. In everything they make, they hollow out a central place for death, let its rancid smell contaminate every dimension of whatever still survives." This is not protected speech, but the ravings of a lunatic. Were there an Anti-Defamation League for men, Andrea Dworkin would keep it busy single-handed.

Sure, Dworkin opposes pornography, on the grounds that it "exploits women" (antipornography feminists being singularly blind to the prevalence of homosexual, masochistic, and pedophilic pornography). But Ms. King fails to point out that there is a crucial difference in the reasons for feminist and conservative opposition to pornography. Feminists who oppose pornography do so out of antagonism to masculinity and femininity, normal heterosexuality being their actual target (Dworkin describes intercourse as a "scarring, hurting, jagged edge of pain and grief"); conservatives who oppose pornography do so because it encourages socially corrosive forms of sexuality. These points of view are fundamentally irreconcilable, and lead to strikingly different legal positions. Thus, feminist definitions of pornography are so sweeping that in a major decision upheld by the Supreme Court in 1986, a federal appeals court struck down the antipornography law promoted by Dworkin's organization as a form of "thought control" that would place "the government in control of all the institutions of culture, the great censor and director of which thoughts are good for us."

Nevertheless, let feminists not despair: *Ms.* is dead, but *The American Spectator* is ready to take up the slack. After all, why should Ms. King be the only feminist to write for a conservative publication? Why stop at showering fulsome encomiums on the delectable Ms. Dworkin? Why not commission this heroic figure TO WRITE FOR THE SPECTATOR HERSELF? Clearly, Ms. King's Boudicean peroration points to no less an honor. In which case the *Spectator*'s editors will undergo the politically maturing experience of seeing their country's name spelled "Amerika" (Ms. Dworkin's invariable orthography) in the *Spectator*'s own pages.

A better approach, of course, would be to relegate the *Spectator*'s resident feminist to the back page, where she can enjoy the company of her idol, and which has momentarily invaded the rest of the magazine. Gentlemen, really.

—Nicholas Davidson
Author, The Failure of Feminism
New York, New York

Florence King replies:

Mr. Davidson's letter sounds so much like the hysterical polemic of a typical Women's Libber that I lost the thread of his argument somewhere around the middle. Like the Libbers, he seems to have a propensity for the logical fallacy known, I believe, as "*post hockey, ergo propter hockey.*"

Nonetheless, I will try to reply to his remarks in a general way.

First, he does not know the difference between a rave review and a mixed review.

Second, he identifies me as *TAS*'s "resident feminist" and "frequent contributor." I must have missed some issues because the Dworkin review was my first full-length piece in *TAS*. My only other contribution was a three-inch squib in the Christmas book recommendations last December.

Third, he calls me a "self-professed feminist." Far from professing such an untruth, I have been called "Fascist Flossie" and "Ku Klux King" by former employees of the late and unlamented *Ms.* magazine, and I am the only woman in America to have been called a *necrophiliac* by NOW. The story is too long to go into, but you must admit I have achieved a first.

Politically, I fall somewhere to the right of Vlad the Impaler; I believe in absolute monarchy and the divine right of kings, and define democracy as the crude leading the crud. As for sexual equality, I've had wimp and I've had macho, and macho is better. Thanks to Women's Libbers, today's men are so pussy-whipped that if they had been on the *Titanic*, they would have apologized for damage to the iceberg.

I am prouder of that Dworkin review than anything I've written in eight years as a reviewer. Felix Unger thinks it's fun to be neat; I think it's fun to be fair.

CFR Goes Too Far

Imagine my surprise upon learning that Mr. Tyrrell proudly professes to be a hireling of the one-worlders ("Hill-Jack Bugaboos," *TAS*, January 1990). Mr. Tyrrell's case turns on establishing a false dichotomy (either you are serious about foreign affairs, in which case you recognize the superior wisdom of the Council on Foreign Relations, or you are not, in which case you are a reactionary peckerwood or left-wing hippie).

Let me assure Mr. Tyrrell there are some of us whose domestic accoutrements include neither motorcycle parts in the drawing room nor FMLN posters in the study, who are yet dubious about the bona fides of the CFR. Mr. Tyrrell, of course, is entitled to belong to any organization he wishes; he is perfectly right in describing those who demand his public recantation as coercive imbeciles. But for him to leap to the conclusion that all opponents of the CFR (including Barry Goldwater) are morons is equally childish and unbecoming. . . .

Is Mr. Tyrrell angling for the Strange New Respect Award?

—Michael S. Lofgren
Alexandria, Virginia

Down the Hatch

Surely no one in Washington deserves a Strange New Respect Award more than Orrin Hatch (see Tom Bethell's "Communists Shoot People, Don't They?" *TAS*, January 1990). He would have earned it even if his only act of betrayal had been his co-sponsorship of the so-called Act for Better Child Care Services, an especially pernicious and mind-bogglingly expensive social engineering/income redistribution program designed to kick mothers and babies out of their homes—the former into factory assembly lines, the latter into government-controlled institutions.

Not content with this perfidy, however, Mr. Hatch—as if striving to prove to skeptics on the left how genuine are his new-found compassion and enlightenment—has joined forces with Teddy Kennedy in an attempt to throw more taxpayer money at Title X, the federal "family planning" program that has proved to be such a spectacular failure at curbing teenage pregnancy, abortion, and illegitimacy. Mr. Kennedy's proposed legislation, which Mr. Hatch has endorsed, would hand over more of our hard-earned money to America's premier abortion provider (Planned Parenthood), provide funds for developing and marketing RU-486 (the

(continued on page 41)

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EDITORIALS

THE LEFT UNSCATHED

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

As history suddenly and unexpectedly unfreezes all the ancient civilizations of Eastern Europe and perhaps even those of the Soviet peripheries, thoughtful persons are conjuring with large ideas. The other day former U.N. Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick was wondering aloud how many of the recently unfrozen countries of Eastern Europe might adopt democratic institutions and how many would revert to dictatorship. Bulgaria? Rumania? Neither has had much experience with the League of Women Voters or for that matter with any voters.

And in London not long ago, the editor of the conservative *Sunday Telegraph*, Peregrine Worsthorne, was equally pensive, as the detumescence of Communism in Europe provoked him to thoughts about the consequences of having adhered to evil doctrines. Over the past twenty years American intellectuals have had an easy time evading the consequences of their ideas. They monopolize all the forums of intellectual discourse, transforming them into one vast echo chamber, resonant with the same monotonous and devious themes, and making it possible to ignore that they ever, for instance, favored drugs, a victory for Communists in Southeast Asia, friendship with Fidel Castro, and various other more subtle flights into ignominy.

Yet in other times those who held to despicable ideas suffered the consequences of their thoughts. As Worsthorne observes, "After the collapse of Hitler's Third Reich everybody who had ever said or written a good word about that dreadful German dictator, or Nazism, suffered unrelenting obloquy, and their reputations have never recovered. Even a long-dead 19th-century philosopher like Nietzsche was cast into outer darkness. . . . A whole range of previously respectable ideas was also so tainted and soiled as not to be mentionable in polite society. . . ." This was perfectly understandable, writes Worsthorne, but then he asks a question that no one on this side of the Atlantic has asked yet: "But having done such an exemplary job in anathematizing right-wing thinking, after the fall of the evil Hitler empire, why is not civilized opinion doing a similar intellectual cleansing job on left-wing thinking, after the fall of the evil communist empire? The contrast in reactions is truly remarkable. All the old Marxist gurus are still in their academic chairs of honour, with the young encouraged to sit at their feet and read their works. Nobody seems to think the worse of famous people who until recently were on excellent terms with the East European communist tyrants, or who thought that communism was the hope of mankind."

And Worsthorne goes on to an even more provocative point. He chides the left for now claiming credit for the decline of its old friends in the Marxist-Leninist ghost towns. After all, these leftists were the ones who demonstrated against the West's firmness in Korea and Vietnam, in the creation of NATO and the rearmament of Germany, in arms spending and opposing Soviet adventures in the Third World.

"It was the right that won the cold war," Worsthorne rather breathtakingly asserts, "and not so much the sophisticated, civilized right as the knee-jerk anti-communist hard-hat right without whose brute prejudices the cold war never would have been sustained." More specifically, this British Tory attributes "nationalism, particularly American nationalism, not socialism" to the resolve necessary to maintain four decades of opposition to Communism. And one more thing—"almost as fortifying to the cold-war effort as nationalism was that basic anti-communist hatred for all forms of regimentation, social engineering, even in the cause of equality—a passionate preference, that is for freedom over equality that is shared by British Tories as much as by American Jeffersonians."

Now there are some provocative thoughts for you. Lay them at the doors of former senators Lowell Weicker and George McGovern and all the others who were wont to wow over the good deeds of the brute Castro and Chairman Mao and Southeast Asia's armies of national liberation. It is very odd that nowhere in America is a writer capable of raising Worsthorne's provocative points. □

Adapted from RET's weekly Washington Post *column syndicated by King Features.*

JESSE STEALS THE SHOW

Which aspiring Democratic presidential candidate compares the American military's action in Panama with the massacre of defenseless protesters in Tiananmen Square by the loathsome Chinese Twenty-Seventh Army? The redoubtable Rev. Jesse Jackson, and he did it on ABC-TV's "Good Morning America" the morning of January 8.

When the average American is asked to name the most prominent Democrat in the country, who do you suppose he names most frequently? Is it the benign Speaker of the House? You know, Congressman What's-His-Name, the one who just had his dog, Alice, put to sleep? You know, the one who replaced that wheeler-dealer Texan, Jim Wright? No, he is not the most prominent Democrat. Well, would it be the Congressman who had the homosexual prostitute staying in his home, or, perhaps, the recent House Whip who absconded from Washington before the Ethics Committee sent a posse comitatus out to haul him in? No, again. The most prominent Democrat of all is either Senator Edward Kennedy, the guy whose Oldsmobile could not swim, or, and perhaps a point or two more frequently mentioned, the Rev. Jackson.

Thus I think we can all see why absent the Rev. Jackson on the national scene the Democrats would be in rather bad odor with the American people. With the Rev. Jackson on the scene they are in worse odor. There are many nice, polite Democrats at all levels of American government. Their problem is that there are also many irresponsible rogues among the party's eminences; and Jesse is the most irresponsible of all. He is not just an insufferable ass. He is a left-wing rigorist, whose presence reminds ordinary Americans that not all anti-Americans live in Libya.

It is the misfortune of mainstream Democrats that about the time that former Senator George McGovern won the Democratic presidential nomination these left-wing anti-Americans gained a hoofhold in the Democratic party. They have not been dislodged. Many are as far to the left as various right-wing fringe groups are far to the right, but right-wing fringe groups are beyond the bounds of the Republican party. Left-wing fringe groups, as alienated from America as are their right-wing equivalents, now figure prominently at every Democratic presiden-

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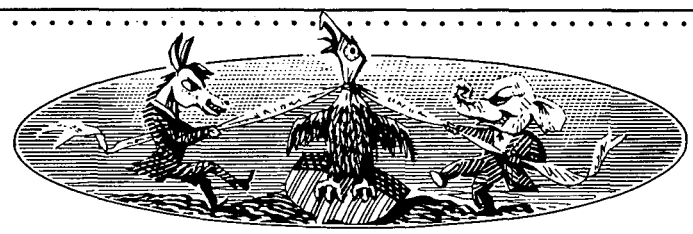
tial convention; and their candidate is the Rev. Jackson.

Comparing our invasion of Panama with the Chinese army's slaughter of its fellow citizens in Tiananmen Square is as irrational a flight of malevolence as it would be to compare our invasion of Panama with the Soviets' past invasions of Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Afghanistan. No normal mind would think of such a wild comparison, but do you know that the Rev. Jackson's did, and he is right now quite possibly the frontrunner for the 1992 Democratic presidential nomination. On "Good Morning America" he said our action was similar to those Soviet invasions. He said we had lost our claim to moral high ground. He said our troops were burying Panamanian civilians "in mass graves," and that the corpses numbered more than 1,200. This he declared when most estimates settled on 300 civilians killed, and when there was relief on all sides that the tyrant Noriega was in irons.

These are not the statements of an ordinary Democrat, an ordinary black Democrat, or even an ordinary liberal Democrat. They are the statements of a far-out left-wing zealot receiving ideas from fringe groups such as something called the Caribbean Action Lobby. The Rev. Jackson's spokesman cites the Caribbean Action Lobby as the source of the Rev.'s intelligence on Panama. It is an organization that is very hard to track down. A Washington journalist tried and finally found a telephone number somewhere in Brooklyn where a somewhat distracted lady, speaking over the din of noisy children, suggested calling back in a few days. Now, that is the enlightened source of this prominent presidential candidate's utterances, and he ventilates his extremist claptrap regularly, sometimes on national television, sometimes before distinguished Democratic audiences. Early in the month at a prayer service honoring New York's Mayor David Dinkins he declared Christ's birthplace "under occupation" by Israel. Well, those who now occupy Bethlehem are its original inhabitants, Christ's fellow Jews. But that is not what the Rev. meant. Once again he was making an extremist point from the swales of the far left. □

CAPITOL IDEAS



THE GIANT RAT OF KENYA

by Tom Bethell

On January 15, ABC's "World News Tonight" broadcast a news story about the African rhino, pointing out that a lady in Kenya named Anna Merz (Swiss, I believe) had fenced in a 10,000-acre ranch north of Nairobi, thereby protecting eighteen black and white rhinos from poachers. Rhinos have a high price on their heads, mainly because some people believe that powdered rhino horn is an aphrodisiac: they are prepared to pay a lot of money for the substance (more than the equivalent weight of gold, in fact). The electrified fence cost upward of $1 million, according to Anne Comfort of Save the Rhinos (an organization based in Washington, D.C.). Operating costs, including guards, will be $100,000 a year.

Someone had thought highly enough of the rhinos to "convert" eighteen of them into private property.

I was reminded of the small group of economists and public policy analysts, and the even smaller number of journalists, who argue that the natural resources of the earth, whether they be timber or rhinos or elephants or wilderness or water or rain forests, will be better protected and more economically used, with less environmental disruption, if they are private rather than state property (or the common property of an indeterminate number of tribesmen). Rick Stroup of the Political Economy Research Center, and John Baden, chairman of the Foundation for Research on Economics and the Environment, in Bozeman, Montana, have been leading exponents of this view, now sometimes called the "new resource economics."

In Washington, D.C., perhaps its most articulate spokesman is Fred L. Smith, the founder and president of a small think-tank called the Competitive Enterprise Institute. A native of Pearl River, Louisiana, and a graduate of Tulane University (1963), Smith is a tireless, passionate exponent of what he sometimes calls free-market environmentalism. He told me that for a long time he was a liberal (in the sixties, he said, liberalism seemed to be the only respectable course), and for more than four years he worked for the Environmental Protection Agency. There he learned that the problem of putting a price on a publicly owned resource was bureaucratically insoluble. Later he read Von Mises and Hayek, and things began to fall into place.

Free-market environmentalism presents your average liberal with a nice dilemma. He likes the thought of rhinos and elephants preserved from poachers. But . . . private property? Isn't there a more humane way? Can't these noble beasts, at least, be kept free from the taint of trade? Since no factory manufactured natural resources, whether they be animal, mineral, or vegetable, no one should rightfully be allowed to own, let alone "profit" from them. Shouldn't they be the property of *all the people*? your average right-thinking, college-educated, environmentally sensitive person will ask. To put a price on a rhino's head is not only to sully nature with greed, it is to doom the animal to end up in a sportsman's telescopic sights. These emotions (I would not call them arguments) were illustrated in the course of a not-very-intelligent "60 Minutes" segment by Meredith Vieira, aired on January 21. This contrived to indict callous zookeepers who sell surplus animals to "big game" ranches rather than exterminate them "humanely." Vieira obviously considered the latter more desirable—presumably because no financial transaction is involved. (What she failed to consider is that the higher the price that any animal fetches, the more incentive breeders and ranchers will have to multiply them.)

Incidentally, there's an interesting comment on journalistic attitudes toward these matters in a recent Pacific Research Institute book entitled *The Yellowstone Primer.* Gene Lyons, formerly with *Newsweek*, describes his thwarted attempt in 1986 to write a *Newsweek* cover story on Alston Chase's book, *Playing God in Yellowstone*, which sets forth in detail the National Park Service's inability to manage Yellowstone National Park. After much research and reporting, Lyons wrote an article sympathetic to Chase, only to see an entirely different story appear in the magazine. In a chapter of *The Yellowstone Primer*, "Playing Games at *Newsweek*," Lyons (now a freelancer) explains why. "At present the urban-sentimental, wildlife-as-welfare client view of natural resource issues is the prevailing belief of the national press," he writes. "Even the minority of writers and reporters intellectually equipped to go beyond the 'Bambi-versus-the-Rednecks' stereotypes that characterize most coverage know that nobody can make a career doing this." He quotes a colleague as saying: "The Washington bureau]of *Newsweek*] is full of people who, when they say 'we,' don't mean *Newsweek*, but the government." Not the elected government, either, but "the permanent government—the bureaucracy."

Fred Smith told me over breakfast one day that the environmental issue that best illustrates his case is the elephant—"the Pachyderm as Paradigm," as he put it. In October 1989, at the Lausanne Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, the U.S. joined with most of the rest of the world in a general ban on all trade in elephant products, including hides and ivory. This is bad news for the elephant, Smith said. This, of course, is counter-intuitive. (Pay attention now, class.)

"Why is a ban on trading ivory bad for elephants?" I asked Smith.

"Because the elephant now reverts to a pest," he said. "A low-grade meat source. People get mad about dogs running through their backyards. Can you imagine how they feel about elephants?" If its tusks and hide are deprived of value by a trading ban, he

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Tom Bethell is The American Spectator*'s Washington correspondent.*

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said, the elephant will be about as useful to the local population as a "giant rat."

"Tell me more," I said. I was intrigued that anyone in Washington would dare compare an elephant to a rat.

He said the whole story had recently been written up in *Policy Review* by Randy Simmons and Urs Kreuter, the former from Utah State University, the latter a range scientist from Zimbabwe. (This excellent article was reprinted by the *Washington Post*.) Briefly: In recent years, two quite different approaches to saving the elephant have been followed in two areas of Africa. In Zimbabwe, legislation transferred ownership of the country's wildlife from the government to the people on whose land it roams. Farmers thereby gained a stake in preserving elephants, and in permitting controlled hunting by big-game hunters who (according to Jane Perlez of the *New York Times*) spend up to $40,000 "on their three-week jaunts in the bush." Zimbabwe's policies (write Simmons and Kreuter) "are based on the belief that the best way to protect elephants is to ensure that people benefit from their use and thus have a vested interest in their preservation." Since adopting this policy, Zimbabwe has seen its elephant population grow from 30,000 to 43,000. Elephant populations in the countries adopting a Zimbabwean strategy—Botswana, South Africa, Malawi, and Namibia—are increasing at a rate of five percent a year.

In Kenya, by contrast, elephants roam the unfenced, socialized terrain and the government tries to protect it from poachers by banning all commercial use of the elephant, except tourism. Ivory and hide sales are illegal. In July, the president of Kenya, Daniel arap Moi, set fire to $3 million worth of elephants' tusks in front of TV cameras to demonstrate Kenya's "dedication to saving the elephant." In the decade that this policy has been in effect, the Kenyan elephant population has fallen from 65,000 to 19,000. Other East and Central African countries have followed the Kenyan approach: their collective elephant populations dropped from 866,000 to 404,000 between 1979 and 1989.

Why has the Kenyan approach failed? Poachers continue to hunt down the elephant because ivory has (by comparison with the per capita income of the average Kenyan) a very high value. According to Marshall Jones, an official with the Fish and Wildlife Service of the U.S. Department of the Interior (a member of the U.S. delegation at the Lausanne meeting), "the reward for a single tusk is equal to or more than the average per capita income." Therefore, he said, there's lots of profit for all and "middlemen" hire poachers who have the opportunity to earn much more money than they normally see. (He said that a large tusk, valued at $100 a kilo, could be worth $5,000, while per capita income may be no more than $200.)

The elephant, then, is a valuable resource in a poor country. But because trade in ivory is illegal, poachers dominate the (black) market. If ivory sales were legal, however, and ownership of elephants were transferred from the state to the people, individual Kenyans would have an incentive to protect the elephant and to hire Africans as guards rather than poachers. Rather than see the wisdom of this, however, the U.S. has attempted to solve the problem by making the elephant *less* valuable rather than by allowing Africans to realize the value of elephants.

Marshall Jones told me that the U.S. disapproves of the Zimbabwean approach because, by preserving the ivory trade intact, it encourages continued poaching in Kenya—the poached ivory then "leaking" into the legal ivory market. This, of course, is exactly comparable to blaming cattle markets for the continued existence of cattle rustling. It's like trying to stop rustling by

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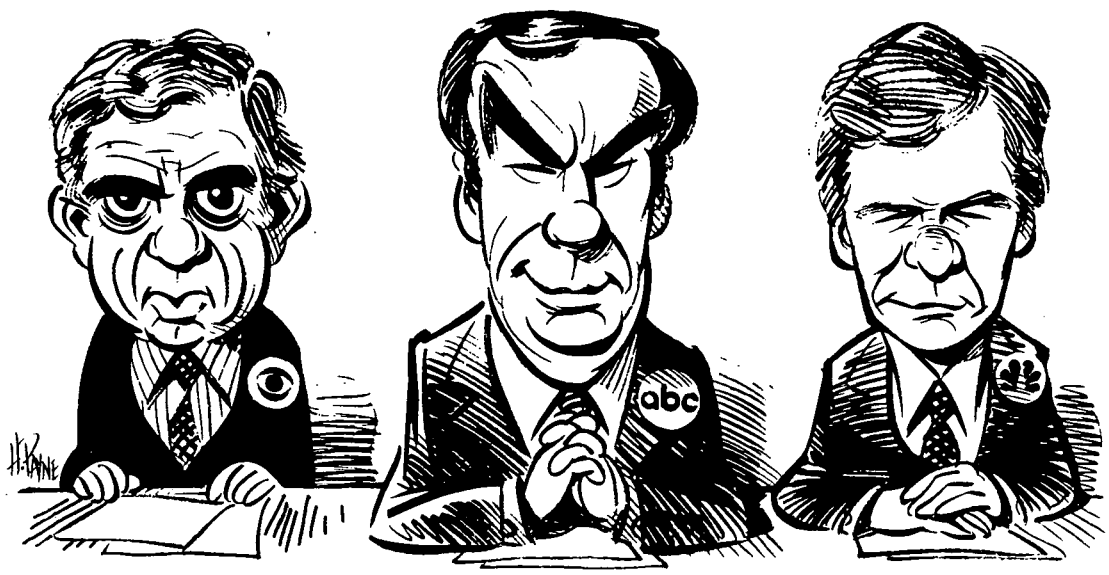

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— Congressman Vin Weber

Every month when I receive *MediaWatch*, I can just see and hear the leftwingers in the major media gnashing their teeth. Bravo to *MediaWatch* for exposing the hypocrisy in so much of what's going on among the 'news' business in our time."

— Senator Jesse Helms

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declaring that the whole world must stop eating beef. The U.S. "conservationist" approach to the elephant is precisely analogous to that. The analogy also conveys the messianic globalism of American environmentalists. We are attempting to make the elephant valueless worldwide, so that "middlemen" will no longer have an incentive to hire poachers. In fact, if poaching elephants endangers the elephant, then it is poaching that should be stopped. Jones says this is "very difficult, if not impossible in impoverished African countries."

Impoverishing the elephant, rather than enriching the country, is exactly the wrong way to go, however, for the reasons that Fred Smith gave. If the ivory ban works (which God forbid, from the elephant's point of view), the elephant will nonetheless remain a large, hungry, and destructive animal —a "giant rat"—with no prospect that sale of its ivory will be able to offset the cost of preserving it by fencing it in and of foregoing any other use of the territory set aside for it. The Kenyans and the Americans riposte that there is one commercial use of the elephant that they will countenance: tourism. People will pay good money to photograph elephants in game reserves. But as Fred Smith says, this is not an encouraging prospect, from the elephants' perspective. If its only remaining function is to be looked at, then we won't be needing very many of them in the future. "Tourism is a way of keeping a few hundred elephants alive," he said. "It's because we use cows to eat that we have tens of millions of them in the United States." Conservationists are behaving as though they really only want to conserve a few hundred elephants.

What effect has the international ban on importing ivory had on the ivory market? "The latest information we have," Marshall Jones told me, "is that the price of ivory on the black market is less than half what it had been." Again, it will be bad news for the elephant if the price falls much lower, because then it might no longer be in the interest of Zimbabweans, and others in the region, to set aside valuable resources to conserve the elephant (although it is possible that the high fees paid by big-game hunters will alone be sufficient). The most important country that did not sign the ivory agreement at Lausanne was the People's Republic of China. South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Botswana, and Malawi also did not sign. So a continued legal trade in ivory will continue. But at the moment it looks as though U.S. environmental imperialism has placed the elephant in jeopardy. When will these people learn that it is not enough to have good intentions? "Perhaps those who wish to save the elephant are simply misled by the no-trade ideology of many American and European environmentalists," Simmons and Kreuter wrote, calling this a "biological imperialism imposed regardless of local realities and values for wildlife."

Fred Smith said the problem was the desire of many environmentalists to segregate the animal kingdom from the world of human action, trade, and commerce. But segregation did not benefit the black race, Smith said, and it won't work for the animal kingdom, either. Only integration will work, and that in practice will require markets and privatization. At present, environmentalists (through their domination of the commanding heights of the news media) think they can enlist government power to force into place their segregationist vision of nature separated from man. They should realize, however, that governments are fickle, composed of humans who are not incapable of changing their minds. Who, after all, would have thought that Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe, Marxist, would point the way to the correct solution of the elephant problem in Africa? □

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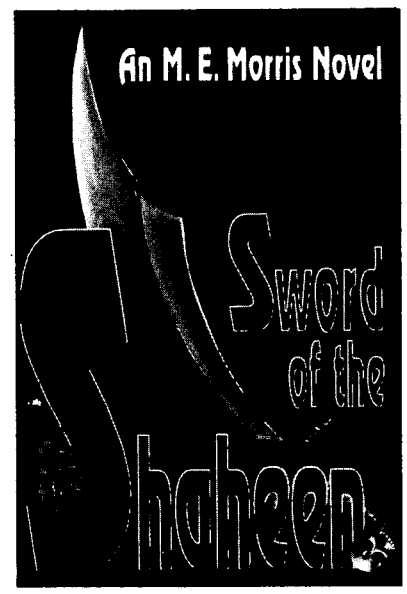

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Cathy Young

CREEPING CAPITALISM IN SOVIET RUSSIA

The problem with Soviet attitudes toward free-market competition stems not from a populace hostile to entrepreneurship as such, but from a system that perpetuates scarcity, penalizes production, and disdains the whole notion of property.

"Every honest man wants to see socialism wiped out."

So declared an outspoken Muscovite, discussing the fall of the Berlin Wall on a crowded street in the heart of the Soviet capital. His listeners seemed to approve.

Lest we bourgeois individualists rush to uncork the champagne, there's a whole army of naysayers telling us not to rejoice. They assert (leftists, to prove that even bad socialism has its advantages; rightists, to prove that the West must stay alert against Communism because perestroika won't work) that the victims of Marxist-Leninist rule may hate the corruption and oppression of dictatorship but they cling willingly to its apron strings.

"Apron strings" seems too cozy a metaphor—but it fits the theory. *New York* magazine political commentator Joe Klein opines that a populace used to being "swaddled by the system" is the main obstacle to East bloc economic reform: "Even in the most repressive Communist regimes, workers receive significant compensations that are almost always overlooked by Westerners: They are guaranteed employment, housing and health care (however primitive), stable prices, and . . . relief from the anxiety of competition."

In fact, these "compensations" have been a left-wing leitmotif picked up by much of the mainstream American media—and thoroughly discredited by the Soviet media in three years of relative openness. The notion that Communist states shield people from the need to fend for themselves—whether that is seen as good or bad—could only occur to someone who has no idea what it's like to get a decent apartment or a chunk of smoked ham in the Soviet bloc. The energy and ingenuity spent on these pursuits would have generated untold wealth if applied in business. The problem with socialist economies is not that human initiative and enterprise have been stamped out: they have simply been channeled into consumption rather than production.

Still, the Soviet public obligingly provides grist for the naysayers' mill. Proposals of price deregulation, productivity-based pay scales, and an end to government subsidies to unprofitable enterprises are met with fear and anger; the hardworking "co-operators," or small entrepreneurs, are a target of virulent resentment. Even those miners in Siberia and the Ukraine who buoyed anti-Communists everywhere by going on massive strikes last July were demanding not only more autonomy from the central government and better living conditions, but also a crackdown on co-ops. Some observers attribute this to seven decades of Communist indoctrination; some, to an even deeper passion for communalism and egalitarianism inherent in the Russian character.

Actually, the preference for the equal sharing of miseries over the unequal sharing of blessings is a universal human impulse: just look at all the enlightened American citizens who would rather have all kids attend lousy schools than allow some to attend better schools than others. Or at enlightened American Democrats whose best criticism of capital gains cuts is that they would benefit the "rich."

The less enlightened Soviet working class has to grapple with a Lewis Carroll world of an economy where nothing is what it seems. Take the miners' strikes. True, the strikers balked at supporting denationalization—except at those mines that bring profits and do not need state subsidies. To complicate things further, many of the mines are unprofitable only because the state makes them sell their output at artificially low prices. Another item: even as Siberian workers clamored for a crackdown on co-ops, bus drivers in the Ukraine demanded the right to form private bus companies. *Moscow News* commentator Vladimir Gurevich summed up current attitudes: everyone is for the market when it's to his advantage.

In this Wonderland, tying pay to output often means that workers will be penalized for not meeting production quotas through no fault of their own—because of antiquated or malfunctioning equipment, shortages of raw materials, and so on. No wonder there were sporadic strikes to protest this ostensibly more "capitalistic" wage system. Yet Gavriil Popov, a pro-market economist and a radical deputy in the People's Congress, asserts that many Soviet workers had been *asking* for *real* performance-based pay scales long before perestroika. Some years ago, the administration of a southern Soviet port, faced with huge losses, tried paying a selected crew of workers per ton of grain unloaded from incoming freight ships, and achieved a tenfold jump in productivity. The rest of the longshoremen didn't want to hang their luckier comrades, only to be paid at piece-work rates too—except that the port's salary funds had run dry.

But pay scales are a trifle compared to the minefield of price deregulation, which nearly everyone recognizes as a necessary step toward economic recovery.

One may ask, as did economist Edwin Dolan in *Reason* magazine last July, whether lifting price controls while the bulk of the Soviet economy remains in the hands of state-run leviathans can do anything except unleash inflation, forcing the populace to pay

Cathy Young is the author of Growing Up in Moscow *(Ticknor & Fields).*

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for the bureaucrats' ineptitude and greed. The Poles saw this very well when they opposed the price hikes pushed by the Communist regime: last August, the Solidarity-controlled Senate said that the government's "free-market" measures were "misnamed," since they were not coupled with "introduction of other market mechanisms," especially by an end to the state monopoly on the procurement of seeds, machinery, and fertilizers.

Clearly, such pseudo-free-market steps would leave the hapless Soviet consumer (there's a misnomer for you!) squeezed between the worst of two worlds. Yet in her 1988 book *The Coming Soviet Crash*, economist Judy Shelton finds the problem elsewhere: the Russians are devout socialists with a visceral aversion, *on principle*, to buying food at market prices. Otherwise, why would so few take advantage of farmers' markets, legal long before Gorbachev, with high-quality produce and no lines?

The answer—*because most people can't afford it*—eludes Shelton, who makes the common presumption that the average Soviet citizen, with no consumer goods to spend money on, has oodles of rubles stashed away in a savings account. What a surprise that would be to the millions of Soviets (perhaps the majority, according to recent studies) who struggle to make it till payday. True, the overall savings rate in the USSR is abnormally high; but seven out of eight people have no savings at all, and of those who do, most have very small savings. That's Soviet equality for you.

Which brings us to the matter of the very real resentment against prosperous entrepreneurs. In the West, such envy is moderated by the high average standard of living. A well-dressed, well-fed person with a house, a car, and a VCR may find it slightly annoying that Donald Trump dresses and dines much more expensively and has a yacht and a jet—but he doesn't get all worked up about it, pathological cases excepted. It's a vastly different matter for a nation of paupers suddenly confronted with ostentatious wealth.

Ironically, before perestroika ordinary Soviet folks used to grumble that everything was a mess because there weren't any owners—no one to profit from doing things well. But these average folks have yet to benefit from the growth of cooperatives. A recent study by a Soviet sociological institute showed that about 40 percent of urbanites have never patronized a co-op, and a mere 14 percent patronize them regularly. Yet only five percent—primarily older people—said that they stayed away from cooperatives for ideological reasons (Judy Shelton take note).

"Private enterprise" in the Soviet Union today is a vendor at a train station selling raisin rolls at fifty-five kopecks each—about three times the state-fixed price—with two measly raisins per roll. The state-owned vending stalls have vanished to make room for these misbegotten children of Adam Smith. In a normal marketplace, someone else would open another vending stall nearby and sell better and cheaper rolls. But in a society of extreme scarcity, why compete for the same turf when one can sell, say, T-shirts instead? There's plenty of room for everyone to keep prices high and still prosper. And there will be for a long time, with entry into the market often restricted by official corruption (which reinforces the popular view of the co-ops' high earnings as ill-gotten gains).

The notion that Communist states shield people from the need to fend for themselves could only occur to someone who has no idea what it's like to get a decent apartment or a chunk of smoked ham in the Soviet bloc.

Some clear-headed Soviet commentators are starting to understand the nature of this problem. *Izvestia* writer I. Kruglyanskaya argues that it is ridiculous to blame the businessman for selling his goods at the highest price he can get: that's the law of the market, and if prices are too high, people should complain about policies that breed scarcity, not about greedy co-operators. She appeals to human nature and to Adam Smith. Also in *Izvestia*, a Soviet journalist with the odd name E. Gonzalez writes: "Co-operative enterprise does have plenty of enemies. . . . Of course, many complain about the prices and the shoddy quality of the goods. One might respond by saying: if you don't like the goods, don't buy them; take your money and go—where? . . . People go to the co-ops because the [state] stores are empty and for no other reason." Cooperatives have turned into new monopolies: "The customer still has no choice, and that is what frustrates people most. The problem is that the frustration is taken out on those who are at least doing something, even if they charge huge amounts of money."

Despite these flaws, the Soviet public's reaction to private enterprise has not been nearly as one-sided as it is often made out to be. Anyone who thinks perestroika is a story of a forward-looking government trying to impose a market economy on a backward people would do well to look at an article in the March 5, 1989, *New York Times* about Soviet private clinics. Early in 1989, the state went after medical cooperatives, severely curtailing the range of services they could provide. "Health officials accused the doctors of gouging their customers," writes *Times* correspondent Esther B. Fein, "and the doctors retorted that the authorities had been shamed by the success and quality of cooperative medicine. Meanwhile, patients were flooding the offices of the new clinics." Three-quarters of these patients were working-class—despite fees that could amount to one-fifth of a worker's monthly salary per visit. Delighted at a chance to escape the state's free health care system, with its abysmal conditions and endless waiting lists, and desperate not to see this chance slip away, they didn't seem at all upset about the doctors' high profits.

The complexity of popular attitudes toward cooperatives is the focus of Gonzalez's article, whose Russian title can be translated as "Can't Live With 'em, Can't Live Without 'em." A survey he cites, conducted in ten large cities by the USSR Academy of Sciences Sociology Institute, shows a society sharply polarized on the issue. Some see co-operators (whom they also call, uneuphemistically, businessmen and entrepreneurs) as bloodsuckers and crooks; others, as "smart, dynamic people who want to work, make money, and live decently." Interestingly, in Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, opinions were almost all positive; in the other cities, including Moscow and Leningrad, supporters and opponents of co-operatives were almost evenly divided, with those in favor having a slight edge. Nearly a third said they would be willing to work in a co-op. Asked whether the government should help cooperatives, respondents were almost six to one in favor; at the same time, many of those who wanted the state to help co-ops also wanted stricter controls over their activity. This indicates large reserves of support for an authoritarian (some would say fascist) model, not unlike the ones now existing in such Asian "tigers" as Taiwan and Singapore. Gonzalez finds contradictory the belief that the government should both help co-ops and impose stricter controls, but adds that "it is understandable: since the market is too weak to control the co-operators, someone else has to." What is encouraging is that a third of those surveyed, primarily those with higher education, share the view that the government should simply stay out of the way and let the cooperatives do their job.

Gonzalez stresses that over half of those polled—as many as 60 percent according to an earlier survey published in September—had a positive view of co-operators. (Another Soviet poll, taken in late October/early November, shows a far more negative picture: about half disapproved of co-ops, and only one-fourth approved. The discrepancy may be due to the fact that this poll included small towns, where material deprivation is far more severe.)

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Yet most also believed that the public was overwhelmingly opposed to co-ops. "Indeed," writes Gonzalez, "a person either reads or hears almost on a daily basis that the people reject co-operative enterprise." He broadly hints that this misinformation is, to some extent, deliberately fostered by the *nomenklatura*, the entrenched party and government elite which naturally does not look kindly upon market-style reform.

The old hard-core Communist establishment, its power and privileges threatened, certainly has no qualms about manipulating the population's real or perceived resentment against the self-enriching. The official trade unions, an object of universal scorn, are trying to gain popularity among workers by mounting an anti-co-op campaign. A group calling itself the United Workers' Front, launched last July, calls for an end to economic reform, a price freeze, and a ban on private businesses. The *Economist* describes it as an organization of "*Lumpen* nationalists." But evidence suggests that the Workers' Front is something else altogether: a front for *apparatchiks* trying to fight back. Says Mikhail Poltoranin, a radical deputy in the new Soviet legislature, "I wasn't surprised to learn that the UWF's coordinating committee included quite a constellation of Leningrad's *apparat* officials," among them the head of the District Party Committee. Other sources claim that at the Front's first congress, black limousines outnumbered the buses carrying the real live workers.

Still, there's no getting around the fact that complaints about cooperatives pursuing profits instead of meeting human needs are quite common, even without prodding from disgruntled party honchos. Such cultural attitudes, Dolan chides in *Reason*, are "far from conducive to the growth of a market economy. Supplying the market with goods and making a profit are seen as mutually antagonistic rather than complementary."

In fact, the sentiment may be less a product of ingrained cultural values than a normal if misguided reaction to the scarcity of indispensable goods—such as rental space in New York, where landlords may not get their tires slashed the way some Soviet entrepreneurs do but are hardly viewed any more fondly, or denounced any less bitterly, for exploiting human needs for profit. Yes, most Soviets want the government to regulate prices, at least on essentials. And in New Jersey, where auto insurance rates were a key issue in last November's gubernatorial race, an ad for Democratic candidate Jim Florio (the winner) thundered that his opponent "would let insurance companies charge whatever they want." Perhaps being raised under Communism is no prerequisite for missing the link between profit and incentive to produce. (Or for being unhappy when things get worse.)

Many blame the deterioration in living standards of the last few years on Gorbachev and his policies. In fact, the decline started long before Gorbachev came to power. His half-hearted reforms, which dismantled some of the old levers of state control over the economy without creating new incentives in their place, may have precipitated the current crisis (sometimes, trying to fix a near-wreck will give it the *coup de grace*). But the crisis would have hit sooner or later.

Two hundred years ago, the instability caused by emerging market relations in France, as Simon Schama shows in *Citizens*, had at least as much to do with the overthrow of the monarchy as did hatred of aristocratic privilege. In the late 1780s, French urban workers demanded to be protected from competition with non-guild laborers, and the deregulation of bread prices sparked riots in the cities and the countryside. Then, too, certain theorists explained that things had to get worse before they could get better. The argument—let them eat long-term gain—wasn't much more popular with the French then than it is with the Russians now.

A former Soviet political prisoner recently back from a trip to the USSR reports that, in meetings with old dissident friends, he found democratic capitalists where a mere four years ago he had left democratic socialists.

In the Soviet poll published in the *New York Times* on November 5, 1989, reactions to free-market change were mixed and confused. Asked about measures needed to revitalize the economy, 40 percent gave answers that the poll taker described, none too precisely, as craving "the return of a 'strong hand' " and 25 percent—a significant figure for a population that has had Communist ideology drummed into it for seven decades—were in favor of free markets. Fifteen percent saw the panacea in Western aid. (Only 20 percent, by the way, said that the government should take steps to keep incomes at a roughly equal level.) Questioned about their first choice of a workplace, 29 percent named a joint venture with a Western firm—showing not only little fear of capitalist exploitation but little nationalist pride about being exploited by foreigners.

Speaking of surveys, one after another shows the growing popularity of those deputies who favor the most radical free-market innovations. It is true, as many observers leap to point out, that many if not most of these radicals envision a society less like the United States than like Sweden. Yes, the Swedish way (which is now showing signs of reversal) may simply be a kinder, gentler, slower road to hell than the Soviet one; yes, the Soviets are crazy to think they can afford a Scandinavian welfare state. But, says Moscow writer Anatoly Strelyany, "Capitalism, even if you call it . . . 'Dutch' or 'Swedish socialism,' is still capitalism, that is, a normal way of life that does not debase human dignity." As long as Soviet people understand this, the fine points can be sorted out later.

And, increasingly, they do understand—young people in particular. A former Soviet political prisoner recently back from a trip to the USSR reports that, in meetings with old dissident friends, he found democratic capitalists where a mere four years ago he had left democratic socialists. One of the few holdouts complained that it was difficult to recruit members for a democratic socialist club: everyone who was not put off by the word "democratic" was put off by the word "socialist."

When Gorbachev and Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzhkov appeared before a national conference of Soviet students last November 15, they had to parry questions along the lines of "Why are we trying to invent something new when the Western model of a market society has already shown its efficacy?" The replies of the leaders, who still bristle at the words "private property," were meaningless and evasive. Ryzhkov said that the Soviet Union would make use of the positive experience of the West but adapt it to "our own social structure." Gorbachev said that, being himself of working-class origin, he knew the opinions and moods of Soviet workers and felt sure that they would not "support those . . . who want to start making our society capitalist." The students, reports the *New York Times*, listened in stony silence.

Without idealizing the Soviet people in any way, it is simply wrong to see them as the problem, to say that they reject the free market when, in fact, they have never been given a chance to accept it. The problem is a government that, after more than three years of talk about the need to get away from central planning, encourage individual initiative, and turn the land over to farmers, comes up with another five-year-plan, laws that gut the co-ops, and long-term leasing rights for peasants. Potential Soviet farmers and entrepreneurs still have no assurance that after availing themselves of the new opportunities, they will be safe from insane restrictions, expropriation—or the same grim fate that befell their 1920s predecessors. As Kruglyanskaya points out in her *Izvestia* piece, ruminations on ways to instill a sense of ownership in people ring quite hollow when people are not allowed to be owners. □

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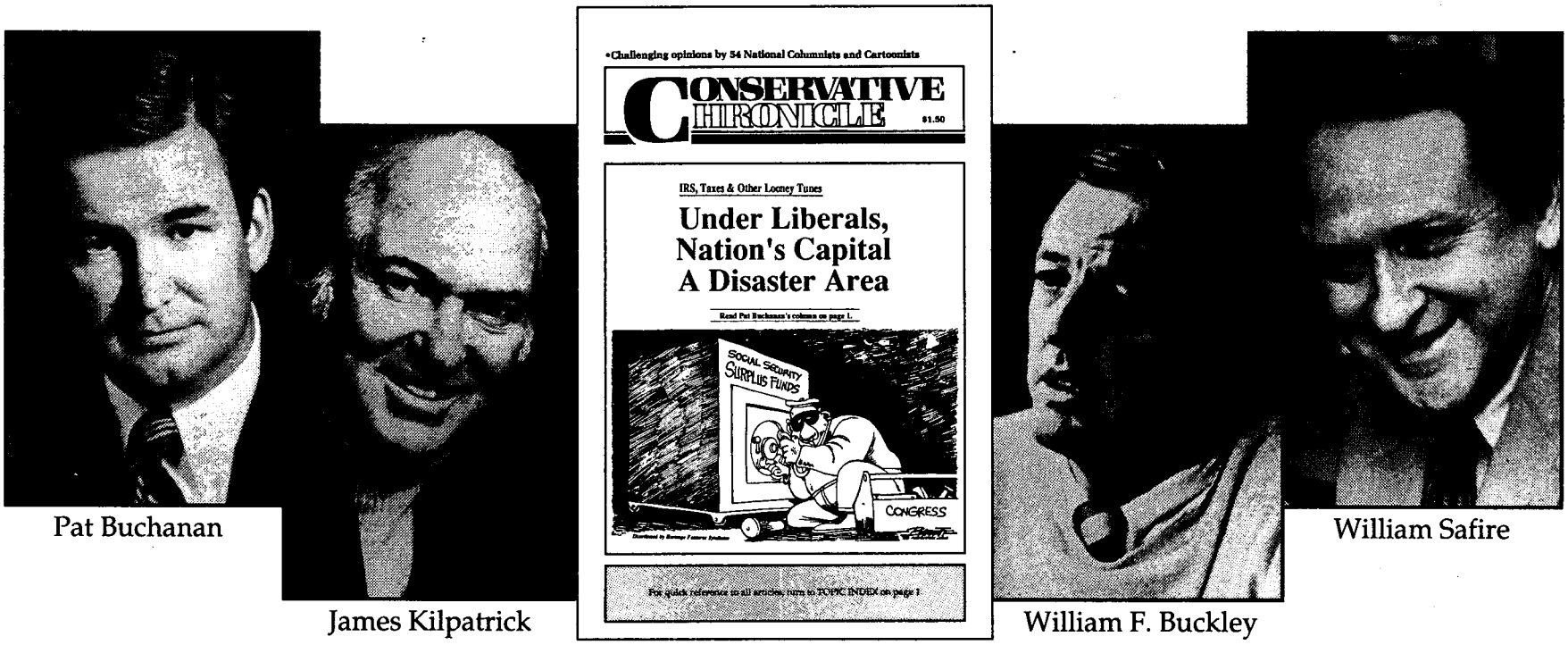
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Marin Strmecki

CONFERENCE HOPPING IN THE EVIL EMPIRE

So you're going to Moscow. Condolences. Soon enough you'll learn that the more the Communists change, the more they stay Communist.

As our jet dipped below the clouds of the overcast Russian skies, it was not long before a socioeconomic fact—the poverty of the countryside—cried out for recognition. It was clearly visible from 10,000 feet and became ever more apparent as the altimeter wound down. Even the villages on the outskirts of Moscow were decrepit, worse than anything in the hills of West Virginia. Roads were unpaved. Houses were shacks assembled from stray pieces of wood, topped with corrugated tin sheeting and angular woodstove chimneys that produced a pall of grey smoke over the whole village. Reports that only a third of Soviet housing had hot running water and that another third had no running water at all suddenly became eminently plausible.

As the workers of Eastern Europe were throwing off their chains last fall, I was touching down in Moscow as part of a U.S. delegation of scholars and government officials to attend a week-long conference on the future of Europe sponsored by the Soviet Diplomatic Academy and the Academy of Sciences. Setting foot for the first time in the Evil Empire, I thought I generally knew what to expect. After all, I had heard all the Yakov Smirnov jokes. Yet even such tutoring left me unprepared for Soviet reality. Soon enough it dawned on me that as academic exchanges proliferate in the present armistice in the world ideological struggle, conferees from the triumphant side in the Cold War will need to know what to expect as they step across the ramparts. In the interests of promoting international understanding, I've sketched a few fundamentals to keep in mind in planning your trip:

Prepare for Third World conditions. Moscow's international airport, dirty and designed in a kind of out-of-date modernism, does not have much over Islamabad's. At customs, we were the only souls to pass through the line for those who had nothing to declare. The other lines were chock full with Soviet citizens who had successfully foraged for their consumer needs abroad. As we drove into town, we were told that our car, which resembled a late 1960s Toyota Corolla, was a "ministerial level" vehicle. Its vinyl seats and filth-coated rubber floor mats reminded me of the ancient wounded cabs limping through the streets of Washington, D.C. It was also equipped with an exhaust system that was somehow hooked into the car's ventilation and heating system, apparently, as I repeatedly found, a popular option among Soviet automotive consumers.

We soon arrived at the conference center, a dacha that doubled as a Young Pioneers camp and a facility to house children of visiting Council of Economic Mutual Assistance delegations. It looked like a cross between a run-down elementary school in Harlem, built during the War on Poverty and hardly maintained since, and an ancient minimum security prison somewhere in the South. Like the Berlin Wall, the dacha's perimeter wall served primarily to keep guests in rather than to keep intruders out. It was impossible to have shirts laundered, and dry cleaning had to be sent to Helsinki. Our rooms were furnished with what appeared to be the worst of the world's garage sale reject items. The bed was really a cot. The coffee table was only one or two rungs up the evolutionary ladder from a sawhorse. The tattered linens and towels had the texture of sandpaper. The bathroom fixtures appeared to date from the Neolithic Age. But there was soap! Thus, at least we could say that we fared better than Soviet coal miners.

The aptness of the term "Communist world" was striking. It really is another world. The systemic differences, and their socioeconomic consequences, have produced a genuine parting of the ways in terms of the human condition. The East-West gap has become so profound that to speak of the "industrialized world," which implies commonality among advanced Communist and non-Communist systems, obscures more than it reveals.

Prepare fall-back itineraries. Conference schedules and agendas have no meaning in the Soviet Union. To ask about our plans for some future point was to hear the current version of an ever-changing reality. In Soviet-run conferences, you don't so much do things—which implies the execution of some kind of intention—as have things happen to you. Meeting schedules will be spontaneously rearranged, unplanned events will suddenly crop up and then be canceled without explanation, and whole segments of the conference might dematerialize before your eyes. You will have time to kill.

Tourism works as a last resort. But different rules apply in the Soviet Union. There are a few things to see, but there is absolutely nothing to buy. Consider yourself successful if you collect a few sociological observations while coursing the streets. Apart from the privately owned cooperatives, restaurants have no food to serve. Vodka cannot be bought before two in the afternoon, and bars close at ten at night. Shop hours are sporadic and unpredictable, and even the foreign currency stores have no indigenous goods you'd want to buy. Unusual among Soviet buildings, the shopping mall near Red Square—GUM—appeared to have been painted within recorded history. But the merchandise ranked in quality several grades below K-Mart's. The shoes looked as if they could cripple a man in three hours. The clothes seemed to be made from material only slightly more durable and stylish than Hefty trash bags. The appliances reminded me of items buried in the deeper recesses of the Smithsonian's museum of technology. The longest lines, however, were at the jewelry stores as Soviet

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citizens sought to dump their worthless rubles on anything that promised to retain real value.

Prepare for some good-natured ideological hectoring. Much has changed politically. A great deal of freedom to express opinions exists, and Andrei Sakharov was not alone in advocating genuine democracy for the Soviet Union. But among officials and academics, particularly those who held prominent positions in the now-reviled era of stagnation, some old patterns of thought persist. The same people who used to tout the superiority of socialism are now pushing the line that glasnost and perestroika represent a fundamental and irreversible transformation of the Soviet Union. In the bad old days, those who disagreed were condemned as revisionists. Today, they are labeled obstructionists or even neo-Stalinists. The line may change, but the game remains the same.

Fortunately, on many international and ideological issues the Cold War has not ended. There is still some fun to be had in baiting the Russian bear. But you need to know what continues to get on Moscow's nerves so that once there you will not feel hesitant to talk back to your gracious hosts:

Third world sparring: Soviet officials and scholars will often incant, in their awkward parlance, that as a result of global interdependence and Mikhail Gorbachev's new thinking international relations are losing their confrontational character. This means that they want you to think that the East-West struggle has ended, which, in their view, means that the West should open the spigots and let capital and technology flow into the East.

Remind them of the unresolved regional conflicts in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Laos, Angola, Mozambique, Nicaragua, and El Salvador, where Kremlin leaders are spending themselves blind supporting illegitimate regimes imposed by force, or exporting the same revolutionary doctrines that worked so well in the Soviet Union. While a grave *faux pas* in the eyes of any State Department type on the U.S. side, your remarks will certainly prompt a lively response from the Soviet side. One Soviet academic insisted to me that Afghan President Najibullah was "a great nationalist and humanitarian who sought national reconciliation with all opposition groups, even the extremists." No mention was made of Najibullah's insistence on retaining all real power in any new government or his record as head of the state security apparatus, where he personally directed policies that resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands of civilians.

All those Germans: Though masters of chess, the Soviets have already lost the positional warfare on the German question. Gorbachev has conceded, and his advisers and scholars will endlessly reiterate, that the Soviet Union will not interfere in the internal affairs of East European countries. They become less categorical, and in fact begin to squirm, when you raise the possibility that a freely elected East German government will choose to ask the 380,000 Soviet troops deployed on its territory to make their way to the exits and then to unify with West Germany.

Suddenly, evasions will multiply before your eyes. One Soviet official told us that the Soviet Union does not oppose the reunification of Germany in principle, provided that it takes place under the right circumstances. Whistling past the graveyard, another argued that the East Germans will choose not to forego the security cooperation, economic advantage, cultural ties, and people-to-people contacts that bind the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies. Others intoned that the process of strengthening inter-German cooperation cannot proceed "out of control" and hastened to add that other nations, including Britain, France, and Poland, shared the Soviet view. A top adviser to Gorbachev summarized their bottom line by saying, "The issue of reunification should not move faster than that of the unification of Europe—that is, the dismantling of the blocs." Thus, Moscow holds that German unification cannot be permitted until the two blocs are in effect transformed into rival debating societies—i.e., no time soon.

Leninist pluralism: Most Soviets do not like to be reminded of the difference between "democratization," Gorbachev's slogan for political reform, and democracy. Article 6 of the Soviet constitution still guarantees the "leading role" of the Communist party, and only massive popular pressure has prompted Gorbachev to entertain debate on the issue. Moreover, about two-thirds of the members of the Congress of People's Deputies eased into their seats without facing competitive elections. Though his rhetoric has begun to conjure up a revolution from below, Gorbachev so far has insisted on leading a revolution from above.

True Soviet reformers, some of whom you will encounter, will sheepishly grant your points. But most officials and academics, muscling square pegs into round holes, will argue that pluralism already exists within the Leninist political framework. In our meetings, one Soviet official argued that the non-Russian nationalist popular fronts, the independent social and political groups like *Pamyat*, and the bloc of pro-democracy opposition deputies in the Supreme Soviet represented de facto pluralism.

Yet theirs is an odd kind of pluralism. In the next breath, Soviet officials and academics will justify Gorbachev's exclusive grip on real power on the grounds of necessity. One of his top advisers stated that "Gorbachev alone can secure the transition to a new system. He needs to have the power to make changes." He later added, "We are in a deep crisis. There can be a blowup leading to chaos. The only institution that prevents this from happening is the Communist party." He saw no contradiction in his notion of pluralism without the prospect of sharing or transferring power.

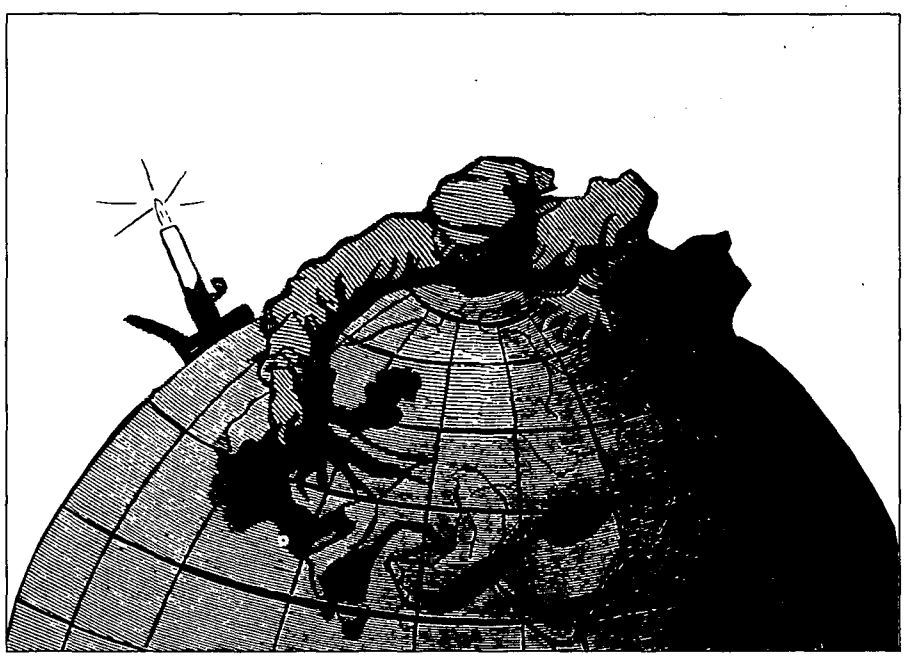
I had heard all the Yakov Smirnov jokes. Yet even such tutoring left me unprepared for Soviet reality.

Muddling through reform: Ask your Soviet counterparts about the concrete goals of perestroika. You will be told, as we were, that perestroika will move the Soviet Union "in the direction of" a less dogmatic approach to life, a mixed economy guided by market forces, a law-based state, and a more democratic and decentralized political order. Yet all efforts to pry loose a specific vision of a reformed Soviet economy after perestroika or a plan about how to get from here to there will go unrewarded.

You come away with the impression that if Gorbachev knows what he's doing he hasn't let anyone else in on the secret. Some Soviets understand individual pieces of the puzzle, such as the need to make the ruble convertible internationally, to vent pent-up inflationary pressures, to permit private property under another name, or to pull the economic planning ministries up by the roots. Yet few understand the centrality of free prices to the efficient allocation of goods. And virtually no one puts the various pieces together into a coherent reform strategy, much less one that adequately copes with the severe economic dislocations and inflation inherent in the transition to a market-based economy.

When you meet and greet Soviet officialdom, Gorbachev no longer appears to be the master strategist and tactician depicted in *Time*'s Man of the Decade issue but rather an improviser who is confronted with a mounting crisis and a gridlocked political system and who resorts to radical rhetoric but chooses incremental change.

Unrequited convergence theory: The current rage among Soviet intellectualoids is the scientific-technological revolution. The rapid changes in communications and computer technology, the theory runs, are the driving force behind social change around the world and will lead to a convergence of socialist and capitalist systems. Socialism as such has not failed, in their view, but rather circumstances require the reform of the Stalinist model of socialism. As one Soviet official neatly put it, "The failure has not been of the ideas of Socialism and Communism but simply of one model derived from those ideas." You will have to remind your Soviet counterparts which side of the Iron Curtain invented the scientific-technological revolution and which side has yet to produce a decent 64K personal computer. As one of my American colleagues pointed out, if the Soviets ever



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succeed in creating a dynamic economy, it will be a case not of convergence but conversion.

The dead hand of Lenin: The corpse in Red Square remains one of the most powerful political figures in the Soviet Union. Lenin exercises a kind of posthumous veto over legislation that trespasses the lines of ideological probity. Despite its proven link to prosperity, private property remains out of bounds because, as one Soviet academic put it, "Marx and Lenin would not approve."

Your Soviet counterparts will routinely resort to comparisons to Lenin's New Economic Policy (NEP) in order to legitimate Gorbachev's reforms. As a high-level official explained, "Gorbachev has pointed out that there was a Leninist system after the period of War Communism. It involved a new framework for socialist ideas. It was not utopian. NEP, peaceful coexistence, and the national constitution of the state were some of the components of that system." The lunacy of basing economic and political institutions of the late twentieth century on those of Soviet Russia in the twenties escapes them.

Moreover, if you scratch some Soviet reformers, you will uncover unreconstructed Leninists. Gorbachev has given the boot to scores of Brezhnev cronies at the upper levels of the apparatus, but ideological chameleons inhabit the depths of the system. You can smoke them out by challenging the myth of Lenin as great humanitarian. They will emotionally rise to the defense of this man, who in his brief stay in power invented the Gulag and the secret police apparatus, crushed all dissent even within the party, meted out sentences based on the theory of class culpability, and once cabled Stalin, "Threaten to shoot the idiot who is in charge of telecommunications and who does not know how to give you a better receiver and how to make a working telephone connection."

All of this, the Leninists will claim, was dictated by necessity. One Soviet academic argued that "the Gulag existed for the re-education of the reactionary classes" and that "the contradictions within Soviet society required drastic measures to bring the situation under control and to create stability." Another chimed in, "The Gulag was necessary given the situation and political conditions at the time of the revolution." Three-quarters of a century of indoctrination has left its indelible mark.

Your discussions will not all be ideological jousting. You will hear a lot of what you want to hear—paeans to democracy, denunciations of Stalin, recantations of the Brezhnev doctrine, and so forth. More important, you will see something on your visit you have always wanted to see—an enfeebled and crumbling Soviet Union. It is worn out physically, declining economically, and fermenting politically. Kremlin leaders find themselves presiding over what Lenin himself would recognize as a classic revolutionary situation. In 1990, when the political forces that overturned Communism in Eastern Europe will almost certainly take their shot at the imperial center, I cannot help but think that it could not happen to a more deserving bunch of guys. □

Richard Nixon

SHOULD WE HELP GORBACHEV?

Not if you take history seriously.

Last December 4, former President Richard Nixon dictated a long analysis of East-West relations, and, in keeping with his standard practice, distributed copies to a close circle of friends. Portions have been reprinted elsewhere, but The American Spectator *thought readers might be interested in seeing in a complete form what was on RN's mind a few weeks before the appearance of the much noted article in* Daedalus *by Mr. Z.* —Ed.

Before the Malta conference, Secretary Baker said that "this is the first Administration since the war which has been more concerned with the consequences of Communism's demise than with the threat of Communism."

A liberal magazine recently editorialized that we should help Gorbachev because of our interest in assuring the "success of an economically and politically liberal regime without any apparent expansionist ambition."

Time magazine has declared that Gorbachev wants to "transform the Soviet Union into a more democratic society."

The headline over a recent lead editorial in the *New York Times* proclaimed, "The Cold War Is Over." After Malta, President Bush took issue with that statement. He was right to do so. But as the "Spirit of Malta" washes over the West, he may soon find that he is a very lonely member of a virtually silent minority.

On all sides we hear that Western ideas have won and that Communism has been defeated. And yet a Communist, Gorbachev, is the most popular man in Europe. He is equal to Bush in popularity in the United States. Among American intellectuals—those with post-graduate training—85 percent view Gorbachev favorably as against 65 percent for Bush.

Before going along with the conventional Beltway wisdom, let us take a closer look at this exciting new superstar on the world scene. This we know:

- He is a Communist. He wouldn't be General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union if he weren't.
- He is a proud Russian nationalist, with goals and ambitions for his country such as Russian leaders have had for centuries before Lenin.
- He is a brilliant, pragmatic political leader who likes power, knows how to use it, and wants to keep it.

Let us examine what he has done. His political reforms have been an enormous public relations success abroad. They have also produced a less oppressive life for many in the Soviet

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Richard Nixon served as the thirty-seventh President of the United States.

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Union. They are totally inadequate compared to a free, democratic society. But compared to what the Soviets had before, they are breathtaking. Where there was no freedom to criticize, there is now some. Where there was no freedom of press, there is now some. Where there was no freedom to emigrate, there is now some. Where there were no free elections, there are now some.

But keeping this last issue in context, while some Communist officials lost their positions in recent elections, Gorbachev strengthened his. He is the most powerful Soviet leader since Stalin during World War II. Stalin's foreign minister, Molotov, once told an American who was urging him to support the concept of free elections, "I like the idea of free elections. There is only one thing wrong with them. You don't know in advance how they come out." Gorbachev did not have this problem. He knew in advance how the elections would come out as far as any effect on his power was concerned.

Any objective observer must agree that glasnost, Gorbachev's political reforms, has produced less repression for his people at home and enormous popularity for him abroad. But his economic reforms, perestroika, have been a failure in every respect. The rhetoric has been impressive—joint ventures, cooperatives, private businesses, decentralized controls, and even some kind words about free markets. The results have been virtually nil. For example, in the ten years of Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms, the per capita income of the Chinese people has doubled; in the five years of Gorbachev's rule, including three in which perestroika was in effect, the per capita income of the Russian people went down.

Gorbachev's foreign policy has been a brilliant public relations success, particularly in the West. He withdrew the Red Army from Afghanistan and played a role in getting Vietnamese troops out of Cambodia and Cuban troops out of Angola. He announced unilateral cuts in his defense budget and reductions in his Warsaw Pact forces. Most important, he has repudiated the Brezhnev doctrine and has even been credited by some for the repudiation of Communism by the people of Poland, East Germany, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia.

For these reasons, Gorbachev's critics and friends alike agree that he is the most exciting leader in Soviet history. While he has only marginally changed the Soviet Union, he has profoundly changed the world.

But what does he really believe? For one thing, he has adopted a tolerant attitude toward religion, as did Stalin during World War II. Unlike Stalin, however, he meets with the Pope, because he knows the influence and power of the Pope cannot be measured by the number of military divisions he has. Gorbachev often speaks of God, as did Brezhnev, and he likes to say that his mother had an icon over her bed. All this is interesting, but it does not make him a closet Christian, just as his economic reforms do not make him a capitalist and his political reforms do not make him a democrat. In these areas, as in his initiative with the Pope, he has shrewdly said what many in the West want to hear. But it remains to be seen whether his policies will produce what responsible leaders in the West want to see—a truly freer, benign Soviet Union.

Rather than just applauding *what* he has done, let us examine *why*.

When Gorbachev came to power five years ago, he found he was presiding over a military superpower and a Third World economic power. Everywhere he looked he saw Communism in crisis. All the Soviets' Third World conquests were enormously expensive losers, costing them $12 billion a year in foreign aid. Cuba, Vietnam, Ethiopia, Angola, and Nicaragua all required huge subsidies to avoid bankruptcy. Afghanistan was costing lives as well as money.

In Eastern Europe any observer could see that the explosive forces of dissent were just beneath the surface. Communist policies had produced stagnation rather than progress, and because of the massive advances in communication, the people of Eastern Europe knew it.

At home Gorbachev saw that the Soviet economy, plagued with corruption, drunkenness, inefficiency, and shortages, was falling further and further behind the West. He saw that Deng's economic reforms had produced a better life for the Chinese people. He found that all the major industrial nations of the world were aligned against him. He saw that his major potential adversary, the United States, finally recovering from the malaise of the late seventies and the recession of the early eighties, had a booming economy, a strong foreign policy, and a new defense initiative, SDI, that would cost the Soviet Union billions of dollars it didn't have just to keep up.

Gorbachev is a Communist, but he is not a fool. He is a leader of great courage and vision who is not afraid to make the bold play. He knew he had no choice but to reform at home and retrench abroad. Otherwise the Soviet economy would collapse and Marxism-Leninism would suffer total defeat.

And yet for two years, he tempo-

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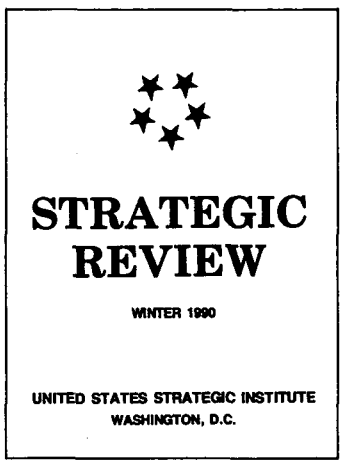

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rized. He continued the policy of his mentor, Yuri Andropov, of trying to get a bad system to work better by eliminating drunkenness, corruption, and inefficiency. All this produced was longer lines for vodka and acute shortages of everything else.

Three years ago he adopted bolder political and economic reforms. His purpose was not to abandon Communism but to save it. His economic reforms have failed, but his political reforms dramatically improved his image abroad, strengthened his political power at home, and earned him the support of an energized Soviet intellectual class.

Even more important, Gorbachev has become the darling of Western intellectuals and pundits as well. He is so different from the old caricature of the sour, humorless Communist that many naively rush to the other extreme and gush that he is "just like us."

As a master of the PR game, he knows how to project the image that we want to see. In a revealing moment, a leading American television commentator said on the last day of the Malta meeting that Gorbachev understood the kind of relationship President Bush wanted to have with him—good-natured, informal, jocular—and had delivered exactly that during the meetings. To continue the reporter's analysis, which was right on target, if Jesse Helms had been elected President last year and had been dragged kicking and screaming to a summit meeting, Gorbachev would probably have tried to win him over by talking about the evils of abortion and pornography.

That does not mean, to use a phrase that has become almost meaningless, that he isn't "for real." It *does* mean that, as we would with any other master politician, we should look at his deeds as well as his words, the substance as well as the style. And one area where his words and deeds diverge dramatically is the one that is the most critical for American policy-makers: Soviet military power.

The defense cuts Gorbachev has announced have had a dramatic effect abroad in reducing Western fear of the threat of Communism. Secretary Cheney has stated that the Soviet military threat is less than at any time in the past fifteen years.

While Gorbachev's deteriorating economy may soon finally force him to cut back, he still spends 20 percent of Soviet GNP on defense, compared with six percent in the United States. In the five years Gorbachev has been in power, all three legs of the Soviet strategic nuclear triad—land, sea, and air—have been modernized. Soviet superiority in tanks, chemical weapons, and combat aircraft has been maintained and in some cases increased.

Gorbachev often speaks of God, as did Brezhnev, and he likes to say that his mother had an icon over her bed. All this is interesting, but it does not make him a closet Christian, just as his economic reforms do not make him a capitalist and his political reforms do not make him a democrat.

Total Soviet military spending under Gorbachev has increased three percent every year he has been in office. In that same five-year period, U.S. defense spending has gone down by 11 percent.

What Cheney undoubtedly meant by his statement was that the likelihood that the Soviets' vast military power would be used against the West had diminished because of events in Eastern Europe. Whether or not that is true, there is still no question but that the Soviet Union's military might is greater now than when Gorbachev came to power. Even if he has been sounding to some hopeful ears like a dove, his bristling talons still make him look like a hawk.

The same is true of his foreign policy. Gorbachev has received kudos for withdrawing the Red Army from Afghanistan. But he was getting rid of a loser, and he still supplies his puppet government in Kabul with huge shipments of arms. His clients in Cambodia and Angola are still in power. He provides arms to North Korea and Libya, two notoriously aggressive nations that threaten their neighbors and export terrorism all over the world. He also provides arms to Cuba, which in turn are shipped to Communist rebels in El Salvador after being laundered in Nicaragua. CIA Director Webster has reported that Soviet intelligence activity is increasing under Gorbachev.

Eastern Europe is where we have seen the most spectacular developments. Many say he inspired what happened there. Some say he even encouraged it. Most ignore that it was Western ideals, combined with the failure of Communist ideals he still upholds and opposition to Soviet domination he represents, which brought millions into the streets in Poland, East Germany, Prague, and Budapest.

Gorbachev had two choices in Eastern Europe. He could have repressed the demonstrations by implementing the Brezhnev doctrine. Or he could take credit for developments he could not contain. That he made the smart play and acted in his national interest does not qualify him for sainthood any more than Lenin's separate peace with the Germans during World War I meant that he liked the Kaiser.

The military option was not acceptable because it might not have worked. Even more important, Gorbachev had bigger targets than Eastern Europe—Western Europe and the United States. To do what was necessary to keep unpopular puppets in power in Eastern Europe, he would have had to abandon his enormously successful efforts to seduce Western Europe and the United States. A chance to psychologically disarm his potential adversaries in the West was worth losing his absolute control of Eastern Europe. And at the same time, these countries at least temporarily remain in the Warsaw Pact, and Gorbachev can let the West help foot the bill to keep their failed economies afloat.

Regardless of what he says publicly, Gorbachev cannot be pleased by what is happening in Eastern Europe. His predecessors would not have permitted it. He is not in a position to be able to try to stop it and still accomplish his broader goals. What we are seeing under Gorbachev is a profound shift in Soviet priorities. For seventy years Soviet foreign policy drove domestic policy. Domestic policy served foreign policy. Now domestic policy drives foreign policy. Foreign policy serves domestic policy.

The Soviet economic crisis is so great that foreign and defense policies must be managed in a way that will help resolve it. Whether it is defense, arms control, Eastern Europe, or the Third World, Gorbachev's first priority is to do everything he can to help the Soviet economy. By disarming the West psychologically, he removes fear, the glue that holds the Western alliance together and that provides the rationale for adequate defense budgets in the West. By projecting a benign image abroad, he increases his ability to get the credits, aid, and technology he needs to revive his sick economy. And there is a chance he may have his cake and eat it too if the West fails to see what he is doing and to make him pay a price for it.

This brings us to the central question in American foreign policy today: Should we help Gorbachev? If so, how?

The conventional wisdom is that we should help him. A leading East-West analyst concluded bluntly, "We should help those in the Soviet Union who are doing the right thing." But again, we must ask ourselves whether Gorbachev really is doing the right thing from our point of view. Is he a convert to Western ideas of political pluralism, individual rights, and free-market economy? Whoever believes that will believe that Santa Claus is bringing my grandchildren the $150 Nintendo sets I am buying them for Christmas.

Gorbachev is making a virtue out of necessity. He has changed, but it is a change of the head, not the heart. At a time when he is using his head, we should not lose ours. In providing help for Gorbachev we should adhere to a fundamental principle. If his ultimate goal is to make life better for the Soviet people, we should help him. But we should not help him if his ultimate goal is to make life more difficult for the West by using Western subsidies to build a more formidable, more dangerous Soviet Union.

First, his economic reforms will not work unless they are radically expanded. Bailing out the Soviet economy as it exists now does Gorbachev no favor, just as a banker does no favor to a borrower by making him a bad loan. Massive Western aid now simply permits the Soviets to postpone making the tough decision to adopt reforms that will work. As Andrei Sakharov put it, "In the absence of radical reforms in the Soviet system, credits and technological aid will only prop up an ailing system and delay the advent of democracy."

What would be radical enough? Only measures the West takes for granted but that could destroy Gorbachev as swiftly as a raging virus—lifting price controls, encouraging more entrepreneurism, decentralizing economic decision-making. His dilemma is that if his reforms go far enough to

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work, they would threaten the authority of all those, such as Gorbachev himself, who depend on the Communist party and the central government for their power.

Even if the reforms go far enough to work, it is not in our interest to help Gorbachev unless his foreign policy becomes less aggressive. Even as he issues calls for new thinking in foreign affairs, Soviet power is being applied against American interests in old wars in Afghanistan and El Salvador and for propping up anti-American regimes in Cuba, Nicaragua, North Korea, and Libya.

We can help Gorbachev only if the Soviet Union becomes less repressive at home *and* less aggressive abroad. For example, President Bush is right to support waiving the Jackson-Vanik provisions on providing Most-Favored Nation treatment for Soviet products if the Soviet Union adopts new liberal emigration laws. On the other hand, we should not provide credits for food and consumer goods for the purpose of financing perestroika. The Soviet Union can pay for perestroika itself by cutting its budgets for defense and foreign adventures.

Today Japan is the second most powerful economy in the world in part because for a quarter-century the United States relieved it from the responsibility for significant defense spending. We should do no such favor for the Soviet Union. If we subsidize the Soviet economy while it continues to expand and modernize its military machine, the result could be a Soviet Union that is stronger both economically and militarily than when Gorbachev found it and that threatens us more.

Gorbachev must understand that Central America is a neuralgic issue for the United States. Sending arms to an anti-U.S. government in the Western Hemisphere is unacceptable. The idea that Gorbachev is unaware that arms he provides for Cuba are delivered to Nicaragua and then to rebels in El Salvador is ludicrous. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan destroyed any chance for the Senate to approve SALT II. The continued use of Soviet arms by Communist rebels trying to overthrow the pro-U.S. government of El Salvador could destroy the chances for approval of a START treaty.

We should apply different standards in considering what aid to provide to new non-Communist governments in Eastern Europe. Even if we are not sure the reforms will work, we should gamble that these peoples' energy and creativity, suppressed for nearly a half-century, will be enough to finish the peaceful revolution they have begun. The euphoria of recent weeks aside, it is by no means a sure thing. As Gorbachev has learned, giving people the right to vote and choose their leaders is far easier than getting a stagnant economy to move again. Governing a democracy is far more difficult than governing a totalitarian system. Those who make revolution are seldom the best qualified to run a government.

Talk about a "Marshall Plan" for Eastern Europe trivializes a complex question. The nations of Western Europe suffered enormous physical damage in World War II, but they still had governmental and economic structures that enabled them to use the aid they received effectively. In Poland, East Germany, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia, the opposition forces generally do not yet have that capability. But we must nevertheless be generous with our aid, because we must do everything necessary to see that their efforts to rid themselves of Communist rule do not fail. What they need, in addition to credits in the short term, is expert advice on how to run an economy and how to govern a democracy. The Communists have lost the ideological battle. But the West has not yet won it. The ideals of freedom and free markets when they are celebrated but not implemented are meaningless.

Before going overboard and giving Gorbachev the aid he desperately needs for his terminally ill economy, we should not lose our historical perspective.

Let me quote from an editorial in the *New York Times*: "One week ago Russia came of age. She allowed her people all the fun and trappings of a real election—provoked not publicly by show of hands but in private in red curtained booths behind closed doors." Most people would assume that that editorial had been written about Gorbachev's Russia in 1989. In fact, it was written about Stalin's Russia in the 1930s. Gorbachev is not a Stalinist, but he is also not a Jeffersonian democrat. I am simply suggesting that we should examine his motives just as coldly as he is examining ours.

I do not question Gorbachev's sincerity. He is profoundly sincere in wanting to rescue the Soviet system from a terminal illness. He has been bold and courageous in adopting policies at home and abroad that serve that purpose. We should help Gorbachev—but only if his reforms go far enough to have a chance to succeed and if as a result the Soviet Union becomes less oppressive at home and less aggressive abroad. □

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Pishposh from the 1980s

Reviewing the decade's Big Stories

by Mark Pietrzyk and Michael Fumento

Gas Pains

In the beginning of the 1990s gasoline is selling for less in real terms than it did in the beginning of the 1980s, in great part due to President Reagan's deregulation of oil prices that helped bring about the worldwide glut that persists today.

Estimating $1.50 [per gallon of gas] is totally, totally optimistic.

—Dan Lunberg, *New York Times*
February 27, 1980

Five things that are going to happen . . . $2.50-a-gallon gas. That is, if we're lucky and act soon. Delay, linger and wait [before imposing a dollar-a-gallon tax] and $3.50 is more likely.

—Malcolm Forbes, *Forbes*
January 5, 1981

It would be prudent for any American contemplating the purchase of a new car to assume that gas will cost $2 per gallon within a few years and $3 per gallon during the vehicle's lifetime.

—Lester Brown, Worldwatch Institute
Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists
March 1980

One thing is for certain: prices will continue to rise. We're dealing with a scarce, finite commodity, one that will be running out in a couple of decades. Traditional criteria of supply and demand don't apply.

—Secretary of Energy Charles W. Duncan
U.S. News & World Report
February 25, 1980

All available evidence points to a serious risk of a serious energy crisis in the middle or late 1980s. . . . Putting it simply, there is the very great likelihood of a major world depression.

—Ulf Lantzke, Executive Director
International Energy Agency
New Republic
February 25, 1978

There is a dwindling supply of energy sources. The prices are going to rise in the future no matter who is President, no matter which party occupies the administration in Washington, no matter what we do.

—President Jimmy Carter
March 31, 1979

The Ice Age Effect

In which we find that the "greenhouse effect" is only the latest temperature fad.

It is 12,500 years since the last ice age ended, which means the next one is long overdue. When the ice comes, most of northern America, Britain, and northern Europe will disappear under the glaciers. . . . The right conditions can arise within a single decade.

—Fred Hoyle
Ice: The Ultimate Human Catastrophe
(Continuum Publishing, 1981), inside jacket.

. . . the atmosphere has been growing gradually cooler for the past three decades. The trend shows no indication of reversing.

—*Time*, June 24, 1974

. . . the overall cooling trend is unmistakable, and in coming years it will profoundly affect agriculture, geopolitics and human survival worldwide.

—Dr. Reid Bryson, *People*
November 24, 1980

For years now, climatologists have foreseen a trend toward colder weather—long range, to be sure, but a trend as inevitable as death. . . . According to [one] theory, all it would take is a single cold summer to plunge the earth into a sudden apocalypse of ice."

—*Rolling Stone*, May 12, 1983

The solution is to warm up the ocean . . .

—Fred Hoyle

Arms Reduction, RIP

For better or worse, the missiles are coming down in Europe.

The "Zero Option," unveiled with great fanfare by Reagan in November 1981, was ingenious: It offered what appeared to be maximum arms limitation on an equitable basis—zero missiles on both sides. . . . It also, however, killed the prospect of any agreement. It was palpably unbalanced and non-negotiable. . . . In short, there remains no basis for an INF agreement, and hence none for resumption of INF talks. INF is dead.

—Raymond Garthoff
Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists
December 1984

. . . the administration's famous "zero option" was clearly non-negotiable. By calling upon the Soviet Union to dismantle not only all of its new SS-20s but also all of the old intermediate-range missiles (SS-4s and 5s) they were created to replace, the administration could hardly have expected to create the basis for agreement. . . .

—Sen. Joseph R. Biden (D-DE)
Arms Control Today
October 1986

Reagan's challenge to the Soviet Union . . . could lead Soviet policy makers to take higher risks; it fuels anger, obduracy, and defiance . . . Soviet leaders will continue to pursue [a] very dangerous direction in their foreign policy: to await, or create, occasions for reasserting themselves and confirming to the world that they are not being pushed around by the U.S. One such occasion was their withdrawal from INF negotiations to which, I believe, they will not return . . .

—Seweryn Bialer
New York Review of Books
February 16, 1984

. . . the prospects for arms control have never been bleaker.

—Spurgeon Keeney
Arms Control Today
July-August 1985

For many years, Reagan had mocked traditional efforts by Democrats and Republicans at arms "control." They only sanctioned slower growth in the superpowers' nuclear arsenals, he said. He wanted more—to reduce the weapons [but] Reagan has not fulfilled his lofty goal . . . he advanced totally unrealistic and one-sided proposals to the Soviets . . .

—David Hoffman
Washington Post Magazine
November 30, 1986

So sweeping was the change that the Reagan Administration sought in arms control that it deserved to be called a revolution. In fact, members of the Administration used that word to describe what they were trying to accomplish. . . . That meant altering if not scrapping the diplomacy that had held sway since the 1950s, discrediting if not discarding the agreements that earlier administrations had signed, and mistrusting if not purging many public servants who were identified with the old order. But the new policies, quite simply, had not succeeded in their own avowed terms. . . . The Reagan revolution in arms control was over.

—Strobe Talbott
Deadly Gambits
(Alfred A. Knopf, 1984)

The Once and Future Non-President

Wasn't George Bush supposed to be doing American Express Card commercials by now?

The conservative era, such as it was, is coming to an emphatic close. . . . Dukakis, who already is beating Bush, is becoming a better campaigner and acquiring stature. . . . Bush [is] the Republicans' Mondale—invincible in March, unelectable in November.

—George Will
Washington Post
March 10, 1988

. . . a strong economy may not help Bush as much as he would hope. White House polls reveal he gets little credit for the Reagan recovery; at the same time, he suffers from guilt by association when voters contemplate a deficit-ridden future.

—*U.S. News & World Report*
May 23, 1988

. . . the cycles of recent political history argue that having opted for one extreme for the last eight years, the voters will now be ready to swing back in the other direction. The elections of 1986, when Democrats swept back into control of the Senate, were a harbinger of the shifting preferences.

—William Greider
Rolling Stone
February 11, 1988

Stunned by an embarrassing third-place finish behind Sen. Dole and religious broadcaster Pat Robertson in the Iowa caucuses Monday and gasping for a chance to display strength and leadership, the Bush campaign is on the defensive . . . his national effort in peril . . .

—*Wall Street Journal*
February 12, 1988

Some of [Bush's] aides concede that it could be too late for Mr. Bush to recover from the Iowa caucuses.

—*New York Times*
February 16, 1988

The essential problem with the Bush campaign [is] the man himself. His "message" builds on his loyalty to Ronald Reagan, but his rhetoric evokes images of following rather than leading. His stump speech—delivered in disjointed sentence fragments and punctuated by jittery mannerisms—does little to command respect or confidence. . . . Try as he might, Bush has not attained the stature that a successful candidate needs.

—*Time*, February 22, 1988

[Bush] finds himself badly trailing Michael Dukakis—due in large part to the ways women perceive him, his party and the

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economy. And after eight years in which female voters have been among the first to identify key issues on the national agenda —such as war and peace, Social Security and economic fairness—some Democrats now consider their judgments significant enough to predict victory. "For the first time," says Democratic pollster Peter Hart, "women will put us over the top."

—*U.S. News & World Report*
July 4, 1988

All the signs point to a Democratic victory in November. —*New Republic*
February 29, 1988

. . . one senses a growing belief in Washington that the Democratic ticket will win, even if last-minute voter doubts wind up making the election reasonably close.

—Kevin Phillips
Christian Science Monitor
August 2, 1988

Bush is in danger of seeming to be an Anthony Eden, an elegant, decent, loyal subordinate who had to wait in the wings too long, being useful in foreign affairs while whatever political skills he once had atrophied. —George Will
Newsweek
January 18, 1989

I'm starting to miss him already.

—Ann Lewis, Director
Americans for Democratic Action
Wall Street Journal
January 2, 1987

Solidarity, RIP

Lech Walesa, we hardly knew ye.

The end came quickly, if not unexpectedly. In the wood-and-marble chamber of Poland's Sejm (parliament) last week, row upon row of Deputies lifted their right hands high. By an overwhelming vote, they decreed the death of Solidarity, the 9 million-member independent union federation that for 16 months had shaken the entire Soviet bloc with its bold cry for freedom.

—*Time*, October 18, 1982

Scarcely a Solidarity leader of importance is free. The organization's Warsaw headquarters is shuttered, its nationwide structure destroyed. If Solidarity survives at all—and its chances are slim—it will be through small cells that operate clandestinely.

—*U.S. News & World Report*
March 29, 1982

It is useless to shout the usual denunciations of Communism as an oppressive system or to characterize Wojciech Jaruzelski as the incarnation of the Devil. Nor does it do the left much good to express uncritical praise for Solidarity and its leaders, as if they played no role in the tragedy. . . . Solidarity was noble, humane and idealistic in the broad sense, but painfully inept in its tactics and strategy. It failed to appreciate that there were limits to its power—notably those imposed by a massive Soviet Army to the east—which dictated the need for compromise.

—Sidney Lens
Nation
December 18, 1982

. . . there remains a nagging feeling that the union overplayed its hand: it sought too much, too soon in a corner of the world where change itself is feared and fought.

—*Newsweek*
December 28, 1981

. . . the view that Solidarity went too far has been echoed by some respected Western observers and commentators. "Change, too, has its limits," charged Bundestag Member Freimut Duve, a member of the West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt's Social Democratic Party. "Lech Walesa should have recognized them long ago."

—*Time*, February 1, 1982

. . . speaking of Solidarity in terms of a real and organized force today is a misunderstanding. —Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski
New York Times (interview)
September 29, 1985

There are voices today, even in the ranks of the Polish opposition, proclaiming that Solidarity, the trade union that tried to be everything to everybody, has lived out its day, that new forms of social innovation have to be worked out to meet new needs and new possibilities. —*New Republic*
February 15, 1988

Some bright spots relieve the current bleak landscape. Decades of disappointment and frustration have not engendered a reactionary frame of mind, nor whetted a desire for the apparent freedoms afforded by capitalism. On the contrary, the average Pole seems surprisingly enlightened about the dangers that lie in the Western direction. . . . Many are skeptical of trading the overt suppression of freedom they experience for the more subtle curbs of capitalism.

—*Progressive*, January 1985

Capitalism on the Ash Heap of History

The "pet rock" of 1989 was pieces of the Berlin Wall.

[One] result of world development is an acute all-round weakening of capitalism and a fresh sharpening of its general crisis. . . . by 1980, our country will leave the United States far behind in industrial and agricultural output per head of the population. —Nikita Khrushchev
Report on the Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to the 22nd Congress of the CPSU, 1961

The general crisis of capitalism has continued to deepen.

—Leonid Brezhnev
Report of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to the 24th Congress of the CPSU, 1971

A further aggravation of the general crisis of capitalism was witnessed during these [past] years.

—Leonid Brezhnev
Report of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to the 26th Congress of the CPSU, 1981.

The general crisis of capitalism is deepening. The sphere of its domination is shrinking inevitably, its historical doom becoming ever more obvious.

—Mikhail Gorbachev
The Program of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union: A New Edition, 1986

. . . the scientific and technological revolution, whose distant effects are unforeseeable, enabled capitalism . . . to postpone its historically inevitable end indefinitely.

—Kim Tsagolov, D. Sc. (Philosophy)
Soviet Military Academy
International Affairs (Moscow)
December 1988

The AIDS Apocalypse

In 1986, the federal Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta estimated one to 1.5 million AIDS infections nationally. It has since dropped that figure slightly to 945,000 to 1.4 million, with the chief of AIDS surveillance admitting the real number could be as low as 750,000. The World Health Organization estimates current worldwide AIDS virus infections at five million.

One leading medical school on the West Coast had published a study which shows that the actual number of AIDS victims is from 3 to 10 times the CDC "official statistics." That would mean . . . 14 million may be walking around with the antibodies indicating that they have been exposed to the disease. —Dr. James McKeever
The AIDS Plague
(Omega Publications, 1985)

By the end of 1986, there will be approximately 350,000 persons suffering severe debilitating physical and mental illnesses as a result of AIDS infection who are not included in the total of AIDS cases reported by the CDC. —Gene Antonio
The AIDS Cover-Up?
(Ignatius Press, 1986)

The experts [World Health Organization] predict that 100 million will be stricken by 1990. —*Time*, December 1, 1986

Research studies now project that one in five—listen to me, hard to believe—one in five heterosexuals could be dead from AIDS at the end of the next three years. That's by 1990. One in five. It is no longer just a gay disease. Believe me.

—Oprah Winfrey
"The Oprah Winfrey Show"
February 18, 1987

The Missing Missing Children

In 1985, the FBI released statistics indicating that in the previous year, 30,000 children nationwide had been reported as missing—most for very brief periods of time with most of the rest snatched by non-custodial parents—and that fifty-seven had been forcibly abducted by strangers.

1.8 MILLION MISSING CHILDREN
—cover of *Child Snatching*
by Michael W. Schaefer
(McGraw-Hill, 1983)

. . . some estimates of lost children [per year] run as high as 2 million.

—*USA Today*, editorial
April 27, 1984

More than 100,000 children are abducted each year.

—Jeff Riggenbach
"Lost: 100 Children Every Day"
USA Today, April 27, 1984

According to CHILD FIND, an estimated 1.8 million children become missing in the United States every year. . . . Perhaps the most disturbing figure reported by CHILD FIND is that each year hundreds of children are buried in unidentified graves . . . an estimated 3,000 are murdered each year.

—*Children Today*
January-February, 1984

Estimates on the number of children abducted by strangers range from 25,000 to 50,000; the range of those taken by the noncustodial parent is even wider, from 100,000 to 300,000 each year.

—Grace Hechinger
Street Smart Child
(Facts on File Publications, 1984)

Of the approximately 1.8 million children who are reported missing each year . . . anywhere from 6,000 to 50,000 [are] presumed to be victims of "stranger abduction," a crime of predatory cruelty usually committed by pedophiles, pornographers, black-market-baby peddlers or childless psychotics bidding desperately for parenthood. Only a few cases are solved. Even fewer stranger-abducted children are recovered alive.

—*Newsweek*
March 19, 1984

Afghanistan: Born to Lose

The Soviets beat a retreat from Afghanistan in 1989.

The mujahedin can never be strong enough to drive the Soviets out of Afghanistan.

—Russell Watson et al.
"Inside Afghanistan," *Newsweek*
June 11, 1984

[*Newsweek* reporter Patricia J.] Sethi actually convinced Karmal to grant her an unprecedented helicopter tour of a key Soviet battle zone. . . . And Sethi's report provided the outside world with the first piece of solid evidence that the Soviets are indeed gaining ground against Islamic guerrillas. . . . It's this dedication to excellence that's resulted in *Newsweek* winning over 600 awards for journalistic achievement.

—in-house advertisement in *Newsweek*
March 18, 1985

For the guerrillas, the war is an uphill struggle. Despite the support they receive from the United States, the anticommunist insurgents can never hope to defeat their better-equipped adversaries. —*Newsweek*
March 23, 1987

Five years after the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, Kremlin leaders are as convinced as ever that the war against Moslem tribesmen can be won despite mounting costs in blood and money. . . . Nobody contemplates withdrawing under fire without a victory as the U.S. did in Vietnam. . . . Defeating the Soviet Army is an impossible dream. —Nicholas Daniloff
U.S. News & World Report
December 24, 1984

Afghanistan is not the Soviet version of Vietnam. Only a country with a free press and the right to assembly can have "a Vietnam." —Richard Cohen
"Why Aid Afghanistan?"
Washington Post
January 2, 1985

The Soviets' Vietnam
—title of Richard Cohen column in the *Washington Post*, April 22, 1988. □

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SPECTATOR'S JOURNAL

THE MANDELA DILEMMA

by Micah Morrison

Johannesburg

Outside, beneath the bright African sun, a green Rolls Royce shimmers in the driveway, lavender Jacaranda petals drifting down beside it. We are in the elegant beige drawing room of the white lawyer, waiting for Mandela. Of course, he will not appear today, or tomorrow, but soon. Next week. At Christmas. By the New Year. The rumor retailers and pundits are certain, government officials quietly confirm it: Mandela is coming out. Next week. At the opening of parliament in February. By Easter. He is secretly meeting with President de Klerk, negotiating about negotiations, talking about talks. He is meeting with black leaders. The fax machine and phone lines in his jailhouse bungalow are humming. Jesse Jackson is on the way. Gorby has sent representatives. The Americans are maneuvering. "This is the real stuff now," Winnie Mandela tells reporters at the prison gates.

Meanwhile, we wait. We are trapped in a scene from Chekhov. The lawyer, an earnest liberal reformer, a soldier in the army of apartheid opponents whittling down the system from within, explains how doing away with excessive government regulation will help "empower" blacks. A black servant girl, in a clean skirt and shoeless, pads across the carpet, bringing tea as whites discuss her fate. Not many kilometers away, dust is blowing through the junkyard lumber walls and broken windows of Soweto's poorest quarters. An illiterate migrant worker, one of the thousands of men just in from the vast harsh backcountry looking for a job, squats beside a shack to defecate in a bucket.

The servant and the worker, serfs in apartheid's twilight, do not have much to say about Nelson Mandela, though they too are waiting. He is a mythic figure, but remote. The young and the poor do not really know him. Many of the young who are not poor are militant—they will not wait long for an old man, and Mandela is seventy-one, jailed for more than twenty-five years. The poor—a majority of South Africa's 20 million blacks—are cautious and skeptical not only of the promises of rich and powerful whites but also of the rhetoric of distant revolutionaries such as the African National Congress, the ANC. The poor remain focused on a job, food, a roof, a bit of dignity and then a bit of freedom. They are not waiting for the ANC leader's release, they are waiting for him to make his move, to put his cards on the table. For today there is a sense that at long last the deal is going down. Pretoria finally appears sincere about engineering apartheid's orderly collapse and suddenly a lot of players are crowding into the room. Suddenly, the centrality of Mandela is in question. Divisions in black South African politics can no longer be papered over. Mandela in prison symbolized all of black South Africa's imprisonment; Mandela set free inaugurates a messy and probably bloody era of democratic reform. From now on, all bets are off.

He is safer in prison than out. Crazies of the left and right will be gunning for him. Political loyalties and realities, including a small but influential element of moderate black capitalists, will tax his strength and patience. A new generation of political activists has come to power, many of them scornful of Mandela and the elder generation running the ANC. A recent conference of anti-apartheid groups revealed at least three distinct divisions. A broad ANC front continues to dominate, but the Inkatha movement of Chief Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi, which claims to represent more than six million blacks of Zulu descent, was barred from the conference "by virtue of their track record in supporting the racist government and their continued hostility to the liberation movement and its traditions." Yet some of the manifestly corrupt parties from the Pretoria-created "tribal homelands" were invited to the conference. Black consciousness groups—in broad terms the third major factor, in addition to the ANC and Buthelezi—chose not to attend the gathering. Black consciousness, which includes the exiled Pan-Africanist Congress and the Azanian People's Organization, is generally regarded as more radical than the ANC and bars white participation in "black liberation." The Marxist ANC, still fighting a sputtering "war of liberation" and including many hardcore Leninists of its own, is looking down the road toward negotiations with Pretoria and calling for unity. Others flatly reject the idea of negotiations. "The aim of the struggle is not to negotiate," a statement issued by the Azanian People's Organization in response to the conference declared. "The aim of the struggle is to eradicate apartheid and capitalism."

Mandela will find that the economic realities of the country have shifted as dramatically as the politics in the quarter century since his imprisonment. A largely rural black population is becoming a largely urban one. Education, housing, and health care are in shambles. Levels of poverty vary, but millions live at or below subsistence in urban shantytowns. According to local residents, drug use and crime have sharply accelerated in the last decade. Economic sanctions hit the poor hardest, throwing many out of work and stifling the capital investment that creates job growth. Inflation is estimated at about 13 percent and unemployment is rising, particularly in the black sector. Some estimates put black unemployment as high as 40 percent, though this figure seems unreliable and does not account for a booming "informal," or untaxed, entrepreneurial sector.

"Economically, this country teeters on the edge of ruin," wrote Ken Owen, the editor of *Business Day*. "Foreign investors flee, local money-making citizens emigrate, and the unemployed have become an army of potential recruits for any fool with a flag and a slogan." Enforcing sanctions will not solve South Africa's political problems—unless the "solution" is revolution. But compared to the rest of southern Africa, and even with the problems created by international sanctions, the country remains a magnet for black labor, offering the best chance in the region for economic advancement. For-

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eign workers, as well as rural black South Africans, are flocking to the cities. White South African industrialists and businessmen long ago realized they cannot survive without black participation. And while sanctions play well in Washington, it's the wrong policy at the wrong time. South Africa needs stable growth. As one Johannesburg economist put it, "The difficulty of accepting the sanctions position is that while everybody would agree that apartheid is a cancer in our society, it's hard to agree with those who propose inducing heart failure to get rid of it."

In addition to poor and working-class black South Africans, there is a growing class of bureaucrats, service-related personnel such as nurses and technicians, and small-business entrepreneurs which is "middle class" chiefly in the sense that it can provide its children with good homes, food, and education free from a day-to-day struggle for survival. There is also a tiny segment of the black population that enjoys wealth and comfort as understood in the Western industrial democracies, without, of course, democratic political rights. Naturally, all of these groups yearn for an end to apartheid, yet for all of them the stakes are different. People with a stake, even a small stake, in the system are cautious about radical plans, and uneducated does not mean stupid. The events in Eastern Europe and the wreckage African socialism has inflicted on the continent have not gone unnoticed.

All of this will dog Mandela from the moment he steps into freedom. And one must also note the presence of the unspoken, a factor which may play in Mandela's favor. Blacks and whites rarely refer directly to the times of upheaval, most recently the 1984-1986 period, when apartheid's social engineers brought the guns and torturers out of the background and the townships erupted, "the comrades" emerging to pass sentence on the ideologically incorrect, "necklacing" rivals and "collaborators" with gasoline-soaked tires thrown around the shoulders. And then the match. The worst of times—the wretched souls horribly burned, the black schools and shops destroyed—is seldom mentioned; it doesn't have to be; nobody has forgotten. It's the golem lurking in the psyche of South Africa, the creature that will rise up and destroy everything.

At this point, the government's strategy is the more people at the negotiating table, the better its chances for a favorable outcome. The ANC's current position is that it should represent black South Africa and it is mobilizing a broad popular front under the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) and the Council of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). Although the ANC appears to be strong in many areas, the organization is under increasing factional pressure and a number of other players are maneuvering for power in urban and rural areas. These include the Pan-Africanist Movement, the legalized internal wing of the Pan-Africanist Congress and other black consciousness groups; union leaders such as Cyril Ramaphosa of the National Union of Mineworkers; religious leaders in moderate as well as radical stripes; organizations representing black business interests, such as the National African Federated Chamber of Commerce; rulers of the "independent states" within South Africa: Ciskei, Transkei, Venda, and Bophuthatswana; and power brokers in the "self-governing areas" of Gazankulu, Kwazulu, Lebowa, Qwaqwa, Kwandebele, and Kangwane. The territorial entities are products of apartheid's failed attempts at balkanizing the black population, largely along tribal lines. Although many of them are led by corrupt rulers, these men are not without influence and will demand a place at the negotiating table.

Mandela will have to deal with contending groups and factions within the ANC and outside it, his job complicated by the fact that he holds no official position in the current ANC hierarchy. Union leader Ramaphosa, a leading representative of the younger "Soweto generation" of activists and regarded by many as particularly militant and ambitious, recently caused a furor by declaring that Mandela's "status is no different from the status of any other member" of the ANC. Ramaphosa is an early warning signal from the far left. A major concern of the government and many moderates is that the ANC, still dedicated to "the armed struggle," is firmly controlled by the radical left, particularly by one of its major constituent elements, the South African Communist party (SACP).

One of the ANC's most bitter enemies is Chief Buthelezi, another potential rival for Mandela's leadership position. Buthelezi is a moderate who has long engaged Pretoria in a give-and-take relationship. This has led to much strife with his rivals, who label him a collaborator and a throwback to tribalism. He is, in fact, Zulu royalty, and a good measure of his support no doubt stems from traditional Zulu mores.

Buthelezi's enemies expend great energy to discredit him and he returns the favor. The violence is not just rhetorical. Hundreds have died in sporadic clashes over the years. "The ANC had hoped to come to the negotiating table through the barrel of a gun after winning the armed struggle," said Musa Myeni, a representative of Buthelezi's Inkatha movement. "But that did not happen, and in the end there will be a very interesting mix of people at the table."

Myeni, like others with less direct political antagonisms, believes Mandela is heading toward serious trouble with the SACP. "When Mandela comes out," Myeni said, "he will have to determine whether he wants to continue with the Communists. Because that will cost them votes when the elections come. The failure of the Communist system in Eastern Europe will be raised with the voters. We will say to the ANC: 'Your own professors, your own mentors in the Eastern bloc are rejecting what you want to give us.' The ANC will be pressed hard to split with the SACP. Then you're going to see heads rolling, because within certain trade unions you have people who are Communists and are very active in the MDM kind of conglomerate. Mandela will come under great pressure. Either the SACP will get rid of him—there is that possibility—or he will get rid of them."

Longtime apartheid opponents are alarmed about the SACP's role in the ANC. Reflecting on the SACP's program of action, outlined in a document entitled "Path to Power" that was adopted at a recent SACP congress, Ken Owen of *Business Day* wrote that "there is no longer the slightest doubt that the ANC is led, organized, and controlled by members of the SACP which is, by definition, a conspiracy whose stated aim is a two-stage revolution, first to overthrow apartheid, and afterwards to establish a communist state." The SACP document states that the "struggle for national liberation, the destruction of colonialism of a special type and the transition to socialism in South Africa require a vanguard Marxist-Leninist party capable of providing a highly disciplined organization and the guiding light of the scientific socialist outlook grounded in South African realities."

It's the sort of talk that would go over well in Rumania—er, make that Albania—but it draws concern in South Africa because of the ANC's leading position. "Path to Power" calls for "seizures of property by the revolutionary masses" and "the destruction of state institutions." Most blacks reject the SACP's program but refuse to condemn the organization because it has been in the forefront of the fight against apartheid for decades. Ken Owen fears that the SACP could unleash a firestorm on South Africa that Mandela could not possibly control. The SACP and groups to its left such as the New Unity Movement, he argues, have powerful factions of true crazies dedicated to the idea of making South Africa ungovernable by destroying its institutions of civil society, murdering all who stand in their way, and rebuilding from the scorched earth. In a word, said Owen, "Pol Potism."

The latest information from the ANC does not exactly inspire confidence. The organization shows no inclination to deal with its Communist hardliners. Recent meetings of anti-apartheid moderates with the ANC at its headquarters in Lusaka, Zambia, reinforced the notion that the SACP is made up of neanderthal left-wingers. "Forget about Gorbachevism and perestroika," a participant at one of the meetings remarked. "These guys haven't even embraced Brezhnevism yet." □

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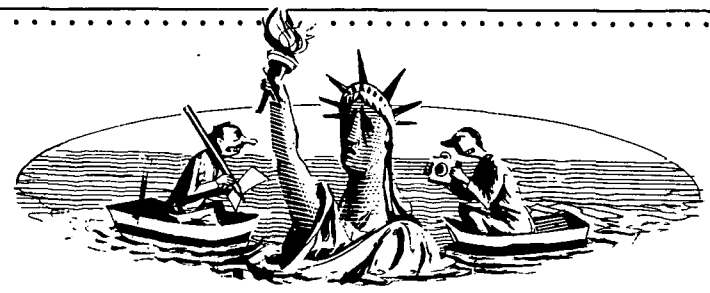


ON THE RECORD

by Terry Eastland

Talking is what reporters and their sources do every day. Journalism depends upon it. But always there is the overriding question: What are the rules of engagement? How—on what basis—is the source (definition: a fount of information) to talk to the reporter?

On the record is not the only way. Other, sometimes mysterious and confusing ways of talking are available. Especially in Washington. Whoever enters this media capital had better know the lingo.

What follows is a list of terms reflecting the definitions generally accepted by those who work in the news business. A short version of this glossary ought to appear in a box in every newspaper and be flashed across the screen at the beginning or end of the network news.

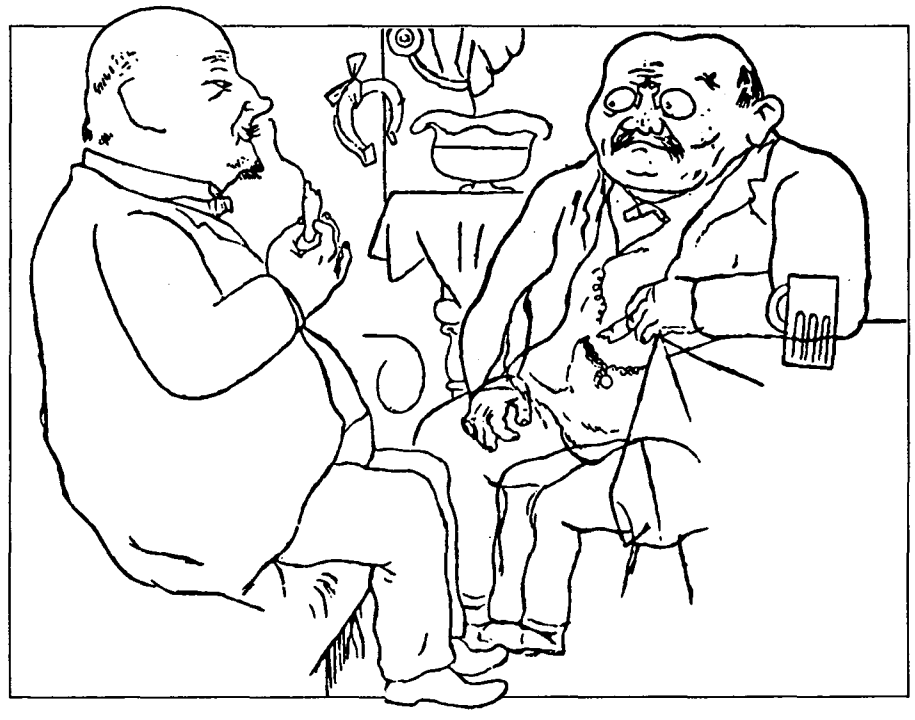
Let's begin with *on the record*, which means for quotation by the named source. That is, the reporter can quote what the source says and attribute the words to him by name.

That nonpareil political lexicographer, William Safire, calls on the record "the most honest and responsible sourcing." Doubtless it was the first kind of sourcing ever done, and there are still a few organizations—*USA Today*, most notably—that rely primarily if not exclusively upon it. (That may be one reason *USA Today* writes so "short.")

On the record is not always as simple as it sounds. Suppose that a source speaking on the record gives the reporter license to clean up his prose. Whether a source does so will depend upon his relationship with the reporter. Assuming they're on good terms, this accounts for how a source comes to speak the King's English (or at least the journalist's version of it) in eight- or nine-point type.

Note that I said: type. Broadcast journalism operates differently. Television reporters can lift a quote from a taped conversation. But they can't edit an incoherent one into "shape." Aware of this limitation, they will ask the same question in a number of different ways in order to elicit a crisper response. Sources who learn the art of the television interview will talk in clipped Dick-and-Jane phrases. By the way, officials who are not household names should not be surprised if their talking heads do not appear on air. What they say on the record may be attributed in a generic way, to a State Department official, for example. They are not likely to suffer a similar loss of identity in the hands of a print reporter. When it comes to television, though, fame matters.

Background is the condition on which reporters and sources often talk, especially in Washington. For better or worse, in fact, background has become a Washington export. Background was not unknown outside Washington a decade or two ago, but it was much less frequently used in gathering news. Brit Hume, the ABC News White House correspondent, tells me that he had never even heard of the term until he came to work in Washington. Now background is in the lexicon of every reporter everywhere. It may even be in *Everyman's*. The story is told of the reporter asking an Iowa farmer which candidate he favored in the upcoming caucuses. He began his response: "Is this on background"?



Background means that a reporter can quote the source but not by name. Instead, the reporter muddies the identity of his source in an agreed upon way. Interviewed on background, for example, Chief of Staff John Sununu says what he says as "a senior White House official." If that isn't general enough, Sununu may become "a senior administration official" or "a government official" or "a leading Republican." A different disguise still is "someone close to the President." There is also that universal if thoroughly unhelpful reference, "source," which sometimes is upgraded to "informed source." Whatever label is used, the source winds up with a greater or lesser degree of anonymity. If a picturehead (television reporter) is disguising a source, the poor chap may actually appear on screen, his intonation changed and face smudged out.

Deep background is a variant of background, "deep" because the information provided by a source cannot be attributed to any of the above generic names but rather to something or somebody else. The purpose of deep background is complete anonymity for the source. Some news organizations will write (or have their anchors gravely announce) "it has been learned." Sometimes there is the active voice: "The *Washington Post* has learned . . ." (and you're never told from whom).

The *New York Times*, by the way, prefers to remain ignorant. It won't "learn." But it will gather news on deep background. The *Times* will state the news on its own authority, as though an eyewitness. Or, as Howell Raines, the newspaper's Washington bureau chief, told me, the *Times* will attach the news to "a variety of documents and officials and studies"—so long as that's true. News organizations prefer background to deep background, but will rely on the latter if there's no other way to get the story.

Not for attribution is synonymous with deep background. Both must be distinguished from *off the record*, which is an entirely different condition of discourse. For most reporters, off the record means that they may not put the information in the paper or on air. I've known some reporters who'll take this a step further to say that what is told them cannot inform their queries of others. Some take it one final step to say that it means what is told them dies with them, as though they were in some kind of priest-sinner relationship. But these reporters are few. Most journalists think it's absurd to expect "off the record" to function as an exclusionary rule to keep information from being obtained on the record or on background (or deep background) and then being put into print or into a broadcast. Most take the practical view, stated to me by the *Post*'s Bob Woodward: "You can't chase knowledge from your head." It's there and will be used to get what was said—from a non-off-the-record source—into the paper.

These, then, are the terms and how they are understood by Washington journalists. It takes two to tango, however, and sources aren't always as

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familiar with these definitions as the reporters who interview them. Only the rare source approaches the level of Richard Darman, the federal budget director who by all accounts is the Michael Jordan of sources, able to pull off every imaginable move in an interview, employing all conditions of discourse and knowing the definitions maybe even better than the reporter. Sources not so knowledgeable and talented as Darman will whisper, "This is off the record," thinking it means, "Use it but don't quote me" (deep background), or, "Use it, just provide me some camouflage" (background). Some sources will say, "Let me give you this on background," thinking they've spoken "off the record."

To prevent misunderstandings (and preserve sources), reporters will sometimes stop a source beforehand in order to define terms. Howell Raines says, "My philosophy is you should talk about these issues, preferably in advance. You shouldn't leave people feeling they are the victim of a crackback block." On the other hand, for Raines, as for most other journalists, a source who agrees to go on the record but later tries to take what he said off the record will probably strike out. He'll be in the paper.

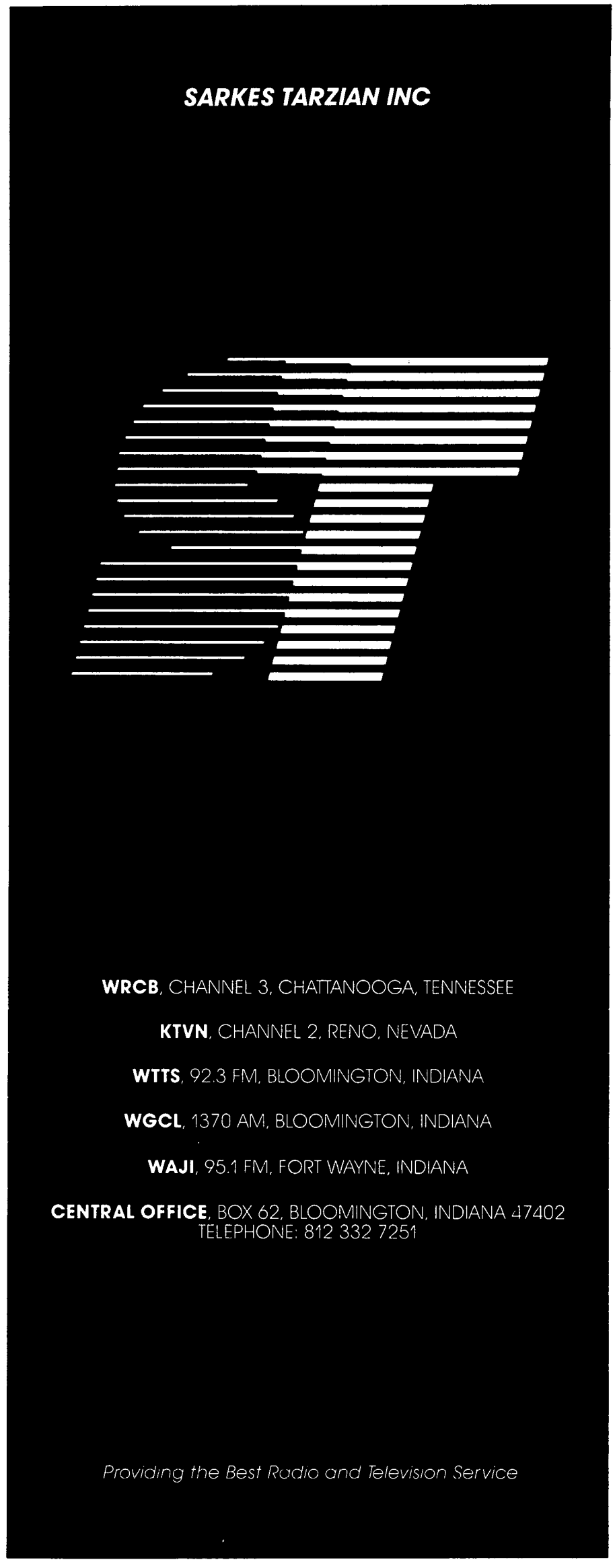
There's also the question of leaks. As readers of this department know, leaks are complicated things. But they have an abiding characteristic: they always take place somewhere between background and off the record. Sometimes, of course, a "leaker" doesn't know he leaked. Unaware of the importance of his remarks, he may be said to have leaked involuntarily. But this isn't what most people mean by a leak. More precisely, leaks occur when a source purposely says or passes something significant along to the news media. (This is why some prefer the term "planting.")

A classic leak was manifested on January 17, when the editorial page of the *Wall Street Journal* published the full text of a "kitchen-sink" document request sent to Clarence Thomas, a judicial nominee, by the Democratic staff of the Senate Judiciary Committee. In an accompanying editorial, the *Journal* said it got the document from "a relatively unconcerned recipient," as interesting a disguise as I've seen if not a parody of the entire practice of camouflaging a source. This leaker had a motive, which was to reveal the request as the unjustified trolling exercise it was. As the leaker probably hoped would happen, an angered Sen. Joseph Biden, chairman of the committee, immediately denounced the leak as a "breach of confidence," thus keeping it—and the document request—in the news.

A leaker is an *anonymous source*, but not every anonymous source is a leaker. An anonymous source may simply convey minor information of a kind that "fills" out a story. "Success is a function of police work and investigation and that's about all," a "former Justice Department official" told the *Washington Post* in the twelfth paragraph of a story on the cocaine investigation of D.C. Mayor Marion Barry. Hardly earthshaking, that, and no, I wasn't the one talking. An anonymous source also may describe the theory or ideas behind a policy; in other words, he speaks from a "good" motive. Sometimes he may have official authorization. When "a senior State Department official" speaks in the lead of a story, it's probably Secretary of State James Baker talking to a roomful of reporters.

Anonymous sourcing is often denounced by not only consumers of news but also reporters and editors, though not always for the same reasons. The main problem with anonymous sourcing of significant information is motive. News consumers are supposed to trust the media to evaluate the motives of anonymous sources and the information they convey. But the truth is, most in the media aren't competent enough to make expert evaluations most of the time. (Who could be?) And there is another truth: many in the media have their own agendas or predilections or hunches, and some are willing to use anonymous sources to get them into print. By hiding behind the cant of "objective news," these journalists are spared the need to reveal *their* motives; never has the news story appeared that confesses, in more or less these words, "The reason we print this anonymously sourced story in which ten senior administration officials trash the President's economic program is that we think they're right." Or at least: "We think it's significant they feel the way they do, both because of their high positions and because we're inclined toward these views ourselves." This lack of candor is one reason the credibility of news organizations is generally in decline. (Though note one exception to the trend: survey data indicate that the credibility of on-the-record *USA Today* is on the rise.)

Some news editors are trying to get their reporters to use fewer anonymous sources. This means negotiating sources "up," persuading them to go on the record. Movement in this direction is desirable. But I'm in a puckish mood, so how about this: full disclosure of motive. Of course, such disclosure would have to be done on the record, although I'll settle for background. ("A source close to this newspaper says that the reason this article has been published is . . .) I'll settle for anything, that is, but full disclosure that's off the record. □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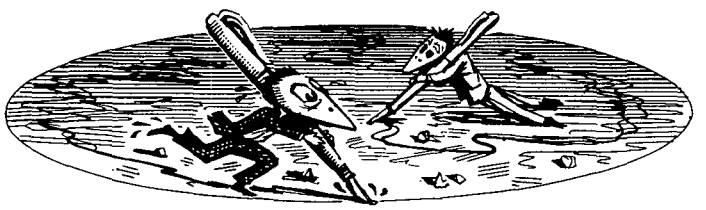

ZOO STORY

by Joe Queenan

In a recent issue of the *New Republic*, Michael Kinsley took museums to task for their failure to deflate the current art bubble. Kinsley feels that by flooding the market with masterpieces from their inventories, museums could drastically reduce the going prices of the limited number of Van Goghs and Manets that are actively traded, forcing prices back down to a level at which cultural institutions could once again afford to expand their own collections. Citing a suggestion first made by Harvard professor Edward Banfield, Kinsley also counseled museums to sell off some of their masterpieces and replace them with high-class forgeries, because only four or five people in the entire world can spot the fakes anyway. The proceeds from the sale of the authentic artwork could then be used to feed the homeless, restore democracy to Cambodia, or complete I-95.

Valid as Kinsley's criticisms are, the most outrageously inefficient market today is not in the art world, where a Van Gogh sold not long ago for $53.9 million, but in the zoological community, where zoo-quality specimens routinely fetch $60 million or $70 million apiece. In a recent survey of investment returns for the period 1980-89, a major Wall Street brokerage house found that investors in zoo animals earned an annual return of 54 percent, far outstripping stocks, bonds, precious metals, Chinese ceramics, and yes, even Pete Rose baseball cards. Salivating at those numbers, speculators—many from the Far East—have bid zoo animals up into the stratosphere. Last year alone, a New Zealand brewery magnate paid $67.6 million for Buppo, a Siberian red panda; a Japanese electronics firm paid $85.3 million for Kismet, a rare Namibian crocodile; and a Boston mutual fund, Select Eastern European Amphibian, shelled out $72.7 million for Biff and Buffy, brother-and-sister Serbo-Croatian bog toads. In each case, the bidders doubled the previous record for animals of the species, and in at least one instance there is reason to believe that dodgy financial arrangements may have facilitated the transaction.

Joe Queenan is a frequent contributor to Barron's *and other publications.*

Curators at the world's major zoos are incensed by the encroachment of speculators, bitterly complaining that, with their limited budgets, they are powerless to outbid cash-rich foreigners for prize specimens.

"Ten years ago, we bought a python, a ring-tailed mandrill, four tapirs and an extremely rare South Chicago puma —yet we still had $4.5 million left over in our budget at the end of the year," says Myrna Kosygin, acquisitions director of the Regents Park Zoo in London. "Last year, even with a budget of $22.4 million, we were forced to settle for a toucan, a pair of not especially rare Manitoban snow gerbils, and a wildebeest. And the wildebeest was blind." Curators at other museums echo Kosygin's chagrin. "With the top zoo animals being snapped up right and left by speculators, we have no realistic hope of expanding our collection or replacing aging animals," laments Tom Flanagan, executive director of marsupial acquisitions at the Cleveland Zoo. "Right now, we are projecting a 1993 shortfall of three hippos, two lions, four walruses and two snow leopards, as our existing collection dies out. Unless something changes dramatically, I see no realistic chance of our acquiring anything more exotic than a flamingo. And that flamingo would probably have a limp."

Gretchen Sturgill, special-events coordinator at the Philadelphia Zoo, sees a Catch-22 situation here.

"To raise the cash to compete with speculators, zoos are going to have to charge the public higher admission fees," she explains. "But the public is only going to pay higher admission fees to see unusually cuddly animals—pandas, baby elephants, mutant spider monkeys. The problem is, at existing budgetary levels, zoos can only afford to buy cranes, storks, armadillos, and caribou. Believe me, caribou do not bring fannies through the turnstiles."

Curators also complain about dubious financing arrangements between zoological auction houses and investors. For example, when Australian tycoon Allen Bound bought Ruffles the Albino Chimp from a private collector six months ago, he only put up $27.5 million in cash. The rest was covered by a $25.7 million loan using Bound's English setter, Disraeli, and his collection of angel fish as collateral.

"The dog's worth $2,500 max; the angel fish you could buy at a pet shop for five bucks," seethes Rocco Barmazian, a bearish Hallandale, Florida, hedge fund operator who has taken a bath recently shorting hyenas, orangutans, and pumas. "This whole deal stinks."

Several observers recommend that zoo curators resort to the strategy suggested by Kinsley and Banfield. Thus, rather than shelling out $35 million for a rare white rhinoceros, they could simply bleach an ordinary rhino. A second suggestion is hiring unemployed performance artists and mimes to don the skins of dead animals and gambol with abandon, creating the illusion of life. Yet another possibility is surrounding cages with magnifying glass, thus tricking visitors into believing that an ordinary hamster is a giant capybara.

"Capybara, my foot," says Barney Furman, chairman of Citizens with Dramatically Lowered Zoological Expectations. "Zoos make such a big deal about authenticity, but you tell me: Does a zoo really need both an emu *and* an ostrich? Or a llama *and* a camel? I mean, who the hell can tell them apart anyway? You don't need Bill Bennett to tell you our kids are so dumb they can't tell a grey wolf from a dingo, or a vulture from a budgerigar. So rather than spending $13.5 million

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to get a new zebra when the old one dies, my advice is: stencil in some stripes on a mare you can get at cost, and use the $13.5 million to improve the school system. Then maybe in a generation or so you won't be able to fool school kids into thinking a porpoise is a whale, and then you can go out and buy the real thing."

But Tatania Pilsener, author of *Gorilla Warfare: The Truth About America's Zoos*, finds Furman's position morally reprehensible. "I would rather every zoo animal in America ended up in the basement of the most avaricious Japanese investment banker imaginable than that we trick our children into thinking that a cow wearing a wig is a lion," says Pilsener.

"Good," says Kinju Ashari, the most avaricious Japanese investment banker imaginable. "When can I stop by and pick them up?" □

THE TALKIES

EGO TRIPS

by Bruce Bawer

Michael Moore is lucky: he was born in one of America's most economically depressed cities, Flint, Michigan. I say lucky because Moore has now, with his documentary *Roger and Me*, become famous off his hometown's misfortunes. He's become just as famous, in fact, as his nemesis Roger Smith, longtime chairman of General Motors and the Roger of Moore's title, who helped send Flint's economy into a tailspin, a few years back, when he and his board began closing plants there and opening new ones in Mexico. Moore's film portrays Smith as a distant, impassive, and amorally calculating CEO; painstakingly contrasted with him throughout is Moore, who depicts himself as an earnest, hapless little schmo, the David to Roger's Goliath (and the proud son of a sometime GM worker), who wants nothing more than to speak to Roger and bring him to Flint, where GM was founded, so that Roger can see the harm he's caused and take action to restore prosperity.

Moore is, however, no camera-toting Common Man. On the contrary, as the film never acknowledges, he's a notorious figure in Flint. Yes, Moore does mention his past editorship of the *Flint Voice* (the local equivalent to New York's *Village Voice*); what he fails to tell us is what a high-profile editor he was, renowned for his leftist zealotry and tireless self-aggrandizement. He tells us, too, about the editorial job he held briefly in San Francisco, from which he was fired for (he implies) being too much of a renegade; what he fails to tell us is that the job was with the far-left *Mother Jones*, whose editors reportedly found him too radical even for them.

Shorn of this political history, however, and disguised as a Capra-esque Everyman whose lifelong trust in corporate paternalism has been shaken to its roots by Roger Smith's perfidy, Moore is not too radical for anybody. Certainly, if the audience with which I saw *Roger and Me* is any indication, Moore is winning the yuppie crowd over with his comedy—which is no wonder, for his sense of humor is as mean-spirited and condescending as David Letterman's. Time and again, Moore invites us to laugh at poor folks because they're still benighted enough to believe that The System will save them. And he jeers endlessly at the bourgeoisie, cutting (in a typical sequence) from a scene in which a poor Flint family is being evicted for nonpayment of rent to a scene in which he interviews some elderly lady golfers at a local course. We're supposed to laugh at the foolish answers they give to his questions about the poor, supposed to see them as heartless for golfing when people are being thrown out of their homes. But it's Moore who's heartless, ambushing seemingly decent folks, implicitly indicting them as co-conspirators with GM simply because they can afford to golf, and editing his footage in such a way as to make even their modest pleasures seem brutally insensitive.

Like Letterman, too, Moore gets a lot of mileage out of ridiculing vapid showbiz figures. A favorite conceit throughout the film is that some visiting celebrity—Pat Boone, Anita Bryant, Bob Eubanks, Miss Michigan—has come to "save" Flint; Moore interviews each of these celebrities, and we are invited to laugh at their ignorance of Flint's economic problems (as if we were all that familiar with them an hour earlier!) and at their simpleminded instant optimism about the city's economy, an optimism which contrasts sharply with the scenes of boarded-up houses and abandoned auto plants that Moore has been showing us. But Moore's attention to these celebs gives new meaning to the phrase "easy target." And didn't we tire of laughing at Pat Boone and Anita Bryant years ago?

More than once while watching *Roger and Me*, I was reminded of Ross McElwee and his documentary *Sherman's March*. Just as McElwee (a Georgian) squeezed easy laughs out of the Southern commonfolk on whom he trained his camera, so Moore has gotten comedy mileage out of Flint locals; just as McElwee made a running gag of his nominal interest in General Sherman, so Moore has made a running gag of his less-than-serious attempt to wangle an interview with Roger Smith; and just as McElwee (an egomaniac in hapless schmo's clothing) put himself at the center of his film, so Moore has made himself the hero of *Roger and Me*. (Like McElwee, incidentally, Moore managed to get his hands on government money: *Roger and Me* was partly funded by the Michigan Council on the Arts.)

There's no question but that Roger Smith made decisions that hurt Flint, and the worst of all—in the view of a friend of mine from Flint who attended the movie with me—wasn't even mentioned in the film: an entire residential neighborhood was razed so GM could build a plant it soon abandoned. But there are aspects to the situation that Moore deliberately ignores. "What really ruined Flint," my friend said after the movie, "was that the UAW got too strong and made increasingly ridiculous demands on an industry that was losing ground to the Japanese. Of course GM went to Mexico: thanks to the UAW, it couldn't *afford* to have cars made in Flint anymore. By the time the UAW's power waned, it was too late for Flint."

These are points that Moore allows no one to make in his film. Patently, he doesn't want to deal with complicated truths, especially those that might weaken his case against GM. Thus, he describes GM repeatedly as "the richest company in the world"—as if there were at its disposal an unlimited supply of funds that it could (if so inclined) dole out to Flint's poor for ever and ever—but he never mentions the precipitous decline in the company's market share during the seventies and eighties. Likewise, Moore habitually implies cause-and-effect connections that may or may not actually obtain: my Flint friend asserted, for instance, that the deterioration of Flint's downtown had less to do with GM's pullout than with the opening of a new shopping center—the Genesee Valley Mall—on the outskirts of town.

Needless to say, Moore's attack on corporate callousness is profoundly

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disingenuous: he, of all people, knows how business operates. He's the very definition of an operator: *Roger and Me* exploits Flint as surely as GM ever did, and Moore is certainly as arrogant as any CEO. His ego trip of a film has become a success not because it sheds light on a significant and complex predicament (it doesn't), but because it entertains its audience—at the expense of an unfortunate city and its residents—while allowing it to feel both virtuous and superior; to put things a bit differently, Moore makes his viewers feel sensitive to the problems of Flint even as he panders to their insensitivity. Indeed, the only person not laughing, in the Manhattan theater where I saw the picture, seemed to be my friend from Flint. "Flint didn't need this," he said, shaking his head, as we left. No, but Michael Moore did.

• • •

In America, when egocentric would-be *auteurs* want to be famous, they make pugnacious documentaries; over in England, they do Shakespeare. Meet Kenneth Branagh, the 30-year-old director, star, and adapter of the brand-new, slimmed-down screen version of *Henry V*. The homely Branagh, who has in recent years won himself a reputation as the reigning boy wonder of the British stage, proves to be a commanding actor and a fluent director; his film moves quite smoothly, and (despite his apparent attempt to counter the pageantry of Olivier's 1945 film with explicit scenes of battlefield carnage) has some magnificent sequences. But it also has the overall feel of a *Reader's Digest Condensed Book*, or even—leaping, as it does, from Big Scene to Big Scene, with all the Dull Parts neatly excised—of a long, long trailer. Or perhaps it should more properly be compared to one of those videotapes that actors put together to showcase their talents for casting agents: for the fact is that Branagh's camera concentrates so intensely on Branagh that the drama, as such, suffers. Henry's Big Speeches, after all, are intended not just as histrionics but as calls to action; yet when Branagh cuts to the faces of his listeners at Harfleur or Agincourt, the tattered extras don't seem to have been told how to react: the expressions on their faces seem to be saying, variously, "What an actor!" "What a time to make a speech!" and "Gee, why's he speaking in iambic pentameter?" Yes, when the speeches are over the soldiers behave as if somebody's lit a fire under them, and proceed to fight heroically; but one misses a sense of vital connection between them and their king.

Branagh appears, in short, to see Shakespeare less as drama than as an occasion for dazzling solo turns. This might explain why, despite his severe abridgment of Shakespeare's text, he has chosen to interpolate several dramatically extraneous scenes from the *Henry IV* plays, all of them featuring Henry's highly colorful erstwhile friend, Sir John Falstaff (Robbie Coltrane), who doesn't appear anywhere in the pre-Branagh text of *Henry V*. Branagh's relative indifference to dramatic requirements might also explain his failure—which has been noted by many critics—to account for the victory at Agincourt of the drastically outnumbered English.

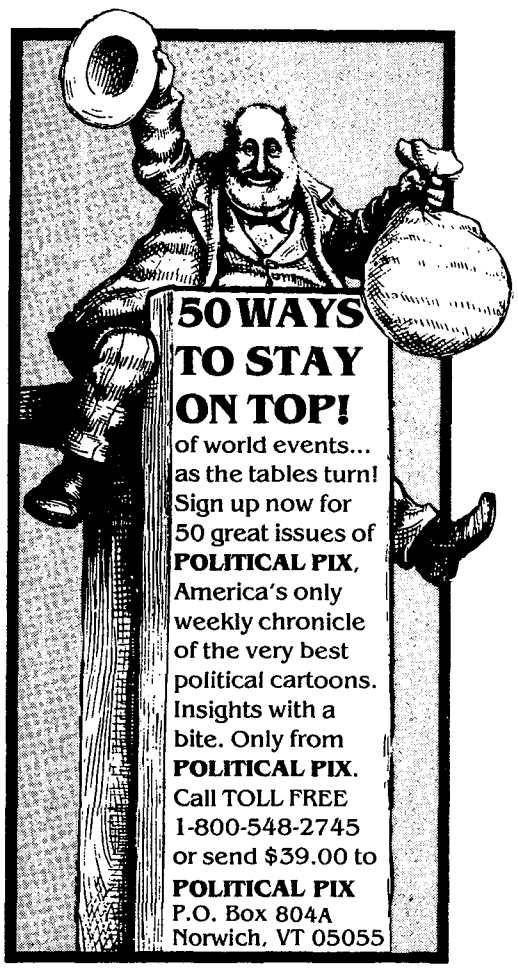
There is, to be sure, much to admire here: the sense of period, which is for the most part meticulous (in the age of Joe Papp, of course, one is grateful for any Shakespeare production that does not feature helicopters or nineteenth-century German military uniforms); Paul Scofield's grand performance as the French king; and the funny, charming, and marvelously natural scenes involving the princess Katherine (Emma Thompson). Yet at times the film strays dangerously close to Monty Python territory. During the Agincourt sequence, for instance, Branagh cuts at least three times to what looks like the very same shot of a sky ludicrously crowded with arrows; at another point, when Henry declares "We are in God's hand," it begins to rain *immediately*; and throughout the movie, the abrupt appearances, whether in a castle or on a battlefield, of the film's one-man chorus (Derek Jacobi) in twentieth-century garb bring to mind the similarly clad roving narrator of *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*. The film's sense of period, moreover, is harmed by Branagh's prissy coiffure, which (thanks to his many lingering close-ups of himself) we find ourselves staring at again and again.

The film's sense of period is also violated—and in far more injurious fashion—by its musical score. For one thing, it's often much too loud: more than once, when Branagh or some other actor is shouting out the climactic lines of a speech, one has the impression that he is doing so in order to be heard over the orchestra. But most of all, the score is mind-bogglingly terrible—hackneyed, vulgar, and (in its aggressive, penny-ante pseudo-romanticism) flagrantly anachronistic. Wherever it intrudes, the sense of period that the other elements of the film have striven for so mightily is completely vanquished; at times, indeed, you'd think the sappy, schlocky music had been borrowed from one of those panoramic, surround-screen movies of the Grand Canyon, the Mississippi River, and so forth that they show at Disneyland. Even the majestic "Non nobis domine," which is sung by an apparently mixed chorus (another anachronism) over an extensive tracking shot of Henry trudging across the corpse-strewn Agincourt battlefield, is badly handled; it's so overdone—the chorus would seem to be of Mormon Tabernacle Choir proportions, and the anthem too elaborately arranged—that it all but overwhelms the on-screen action. (One is reminded of the self-consciously theatrical first-act finale of *Reds*, with its triple-fortissimo deployment of the "Internationale.") I've never known bad music (and good music, badly employed) to damage a major film as extensively as it has this one, and it's simply a sign, I think, of rampant rock-era tone-deafness that the so-called educated public has applauded *Henry V* without so much as noticing how awful and unsuitable its score is.

• • •

It's New York in 1949, and Herman Broder (Ron Silver), a struggling young Jewish immigrant ghostwriter for a rich rabbi (Alan King), has a bizarre domestic crisis: having shuttled regularly, for some time, between his simple, devoted second wife, Yadwiga (Margaret Sophie Stein), the Polish Catholic house servant who saved him from the Nazis and with whom he lives in Coney Island, and his beautiful, lusty Jewish mistress, Masha (Lena Olin), a fellow Holocaust survivor with whom he shares a flat in the Bronx and who is pressuring him to marry her, he suddenly finds himself confronted with Tamara (Anjelica Huston), his shrewd, sardonic first wife, whom he believed dead in the war but who has now come to live on the Lower East Side and work in a religious-articles store.

What to do? Based on the novel by Isaac Bashevis Singer (which was published in English in 1972) and directed by Paul Mazursky from a script he wrote with Roger L. Simon, *Enemies: A Love Story* is the hugely entertaining, richly human tale of a *schlemiel* who is as irresponsible as he is indecisive and of the three remarkable women with whom he rides the Wonder Wheel of life. He's a man whose very ordinariness and lack of imagination have helped to steer him into extraordinarily profane circumstances—who, paradoxically, ends up a trigamist less because of his temerity than because of his timidity, less through lewdness than through a misguided sense of decency. It's a beautifully shaped film, with a rare sense of story, character, and place (and an entirely appropriate musical score by Maurice Jarre); the consistent matter-of-factness with which it contemplates Herman's increasingly outrageous situation is perfect, as is its scrupulously sustained balance of gentleness and irony. And while all the actors are fine, Miss Huston's wise, droll, and thoroughly authentic performance is a standout; the surgical precision and seeming effortlessness with which she delineates this complex, singular woman are breathtaking. Watching her bring Tamara to life, one wonders if Meryl Streep could have played the role half as well. □



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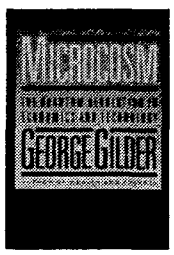

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WHEN IRISH GUYS ARE SLINGING

by Joe Mysak

GUINNESS IS GOOD FOR YOU. The slogan is pasted all over Dublin, all over Ireland. I think I have even seen it scrawled on the side of a church by one wag. "The steak of beer," fellow scribe Nick Boyle once called it. "The meat of drink."

Indeed it is. But do not confuse a pint of good Guinness stout drawn by a professional publican with the more noxious beverage of the same name served up in bottles. Guinness is available on tap, if you know where to find it. One of the most convivial spots to drink it in New York City, a town of convivial Irish bars, goes by the name of Tommy Makem's Irish Pavilion, on 57th Street near Lexington Avenue.

No, they don't sell Aran sweaters, tam-o'-shanters, or Belleek china there. And sure, two blocks away from Bloomingdale's is not exactly what I consider premium turf for a great saloon. Finally, the prices are a little heavy. But you get draft Guinness. And Irish music.

"We play traditional Irish music here," said the pear-shaped but golden-voiced Mr. Makem, one of the best-known Irish singers and composers, one recent evening. "And don't let me hear you be asking for 'Mother McCree' or 'Toora-Loora-Loora.' " He then proceeded to launch into "Wish I Was a-Hunting," a dashing number that sets the tone, for the night and for the place. Or maybe it was "Bonnie Highland Laddie."

Hold it. Mysak isn't an Irish name. Maybe it has to do with growing up in the Northeast, as a Roman Catholic (unlapsed), attending Catholic schools, and going to those same schools' St. Patrick's dances. Certainly, it all means nothing to Midwesterners. It probably means nothing to Delawareans. But let a band open up with "The Black Velvet Band"—*Well, in the neat little town they call Belfast*—and the sweet sickness of nostalgia rises in the heart.

Of course, that feels so good that it's time for another of those great pints of Guinness, and there is the barman, Kieran, drawing it, three-quarters, it looks like coffee with cream—he lets it settle for a moment to the color of black coffee. He adds a little more, a little more, just so, and there is a perfect pint set before the patron, and there you are seventeen again thinking about Mac's sister, Colleen, that blondish redhead, or worse yet, pondering what became of Bridget after grammar school.

"Bridget," said the Celtic poet during one session weighing the merits of different names, and the risks involved. "They're adorable. Even the chunky Bridgets are usually spritely, which can be attractive up until a certain age. After fifty, spritely becomes looney, and should be avoided," he offered.

"Now Katie. Bet the ranch she's a doll. Get it down," he said. "Kelly? Tracy? You can't go wrong."

The Pavilion itself has the varnished wood look typical of most pubs, peculiarly bright lights, and comfortable chairs. Otherwise, the decor is fairly spartan, although there is a particularly nice set of porcelain barrel decanters on display. In sum, there are no distractions. There is Guinness, and music, and talk, and for those with no talk, memories.

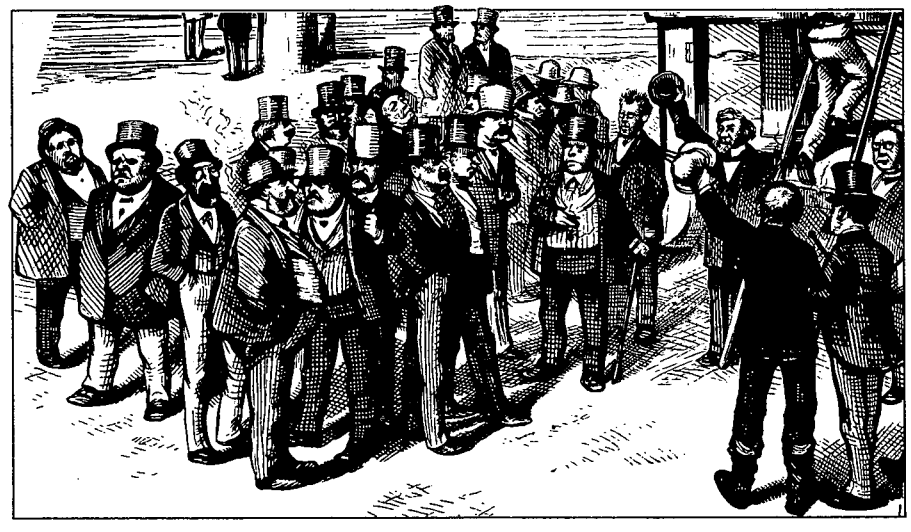
Now for the music. Besides "The Black Velvet Band," more favorites: "The Liar." Or "The Whistling Gypsy Rover," a soft and lilting little tune, with the chorus, *He whistled and sang 'til the green woods rang, and he won the heart of the lady.* Or "The Jolly Beggarman." Or "Whiskey in the Jar." Or "Three Drunken Maidens," who loved to push the jug about. Yes, there is a pattern developing here.

These are songs that want to be sung after one has gone through the requisite number for a buyback, and the Pavilion does not frown on such doings. Makem himself, when he is on stage, frequently takes the time to give you the right words to the chorus so you can dive right in—a favorite of his is "Waltzing With Bears." It is not an easy thing to encourage a singalong at 57th and Lex. in New York City.

These are songs that want to be sung, but they are also songs that are wont to be mangled. Take "Whiskey on a Sunday." The key line is *Drinking buttermilk all through the week, whiskey on a Sunday.* Yet trying to cut this out of a brogue led one Slovak pal to surmise that it was *Drinking buttermilk all through the weeds.* This is a true story.

And I defy anyone to give me the exact words to "Building Up and Tearing England Down," a construction workers' song which features the nice verses: *For the likes of you and me/will never get an O.B.E./Or a knighthood/for good service/to the hod.*

Stay for both sets. Around 10:30 or 11, the Guinness has taken hold, and slides down very silkily indeed. This is well past the stage where you talk about what great guys each of you are, and about what great wives and girlfriends you have, and even past that odd stage where you talk about how terrific each other's wives and girlfriends are. Just listen, now, to the tales.



Consider the dishtowels, for example. The Celtic poet told once of visiting Ireland, and of his Aunt Maureen coming out and seeing him off and giving him a parting gift: " 'Now here you go, John, here's a nice dishtowel with a map of the thirty-two counties of Ireland on it for you to go hang on your living room wall,' and I said, 'Gee, thanks, Aunt Maureen (*now what the hell am I going to do with this?*)' "

This was not news to anyone who has pictures of the first Polish Pope at the old family homestead. But the dishtowels. The honorable writer Doran saw the wily poet, and raised him. "We had them. All those irreplaceable artifacts were lost in the blaze that burned the family home to the ground, thank God."

There is a price to be paid for all of this jolly good time, of course. And that is, The Troubles. There is no way of getting around them. For as long as the English are in Ireland, they will be the sand in the craw of Irishmen.

The Pavilion, obviously, is no place to make a fuss with the issue. I did it once at Harry's at Hanover Square, drinking in the euphoniously named company of Dunne, Doran, and Delaney, when I saw things turn ugly as they tried to decide who was more Irish. I did it, then, for the pure sport of the thing. But not at the Pavilion, thanks. And especially not after Makem sings his own quite stirring anthem, "Four Green Fields."

But there is no sense in being, as the saying has it, more Irish than the Irish. Nobody at the Pavilion demands the patrons take up step-dancing, or learn Gaelic. So down the hatch with another Guinness. Chased with a glass of Black Bushmill's, it is heaven itself. □

Joe Mysak, managing editor of the daily Bond Buyer, *is* The American Spectator*'s chief saloon correspondent.*

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BOOK REVIEWS

HEMINGWAY IN LOVE AND WAR: THE LOST DIARY OF AGNES VON KUROWSKY, HER LETTERS, AND CORRESPONDENCE OF ERNEST HEMINGWAY

Henry Serrano Villard and James Nagel
Northeastern University Press/303 pp. $21.95

Kenneth S. Lynn

Beginning with Edmund Wilson and Malcolm Cowley a half century ago, literary critics on the left have always cherished the proposition that Hemingway was traumatized forever on the night of July 8, 1918, when he was struck in the legs at Fossalta di Piave by a one-two punch—or so he claimed—of shrapnel fragments and machine-gun bullets, and they hate the fact that in the past few years the second part of Hemingway's claim has been dismissed by other critics as a fabrication. For if he wasn't wounded as badly as he said, then perhaps the battlefield damage to his psyche was neither severe nor enduring, which would mean that the politicized interpretation of him as a victim of history whose novels and stories arose out of disillusionment with a dirty (read capitalistic) war was not the heart of the matter.

It is, therefore, no wonder that defenders of the leftist faith uncritically accepted the alleged proof offered last fall by James Nagel, the co-editor and master organizer of the collection of documents called *Hemingway in Love and War*, that Hemingway's machine-gun wounds were real. Harvard professor Warner Berthoff led the chorus of voices when he saluted the book in a jacket blurb as a "permanent, irreversible" contribution to "the much disputed biographical record."

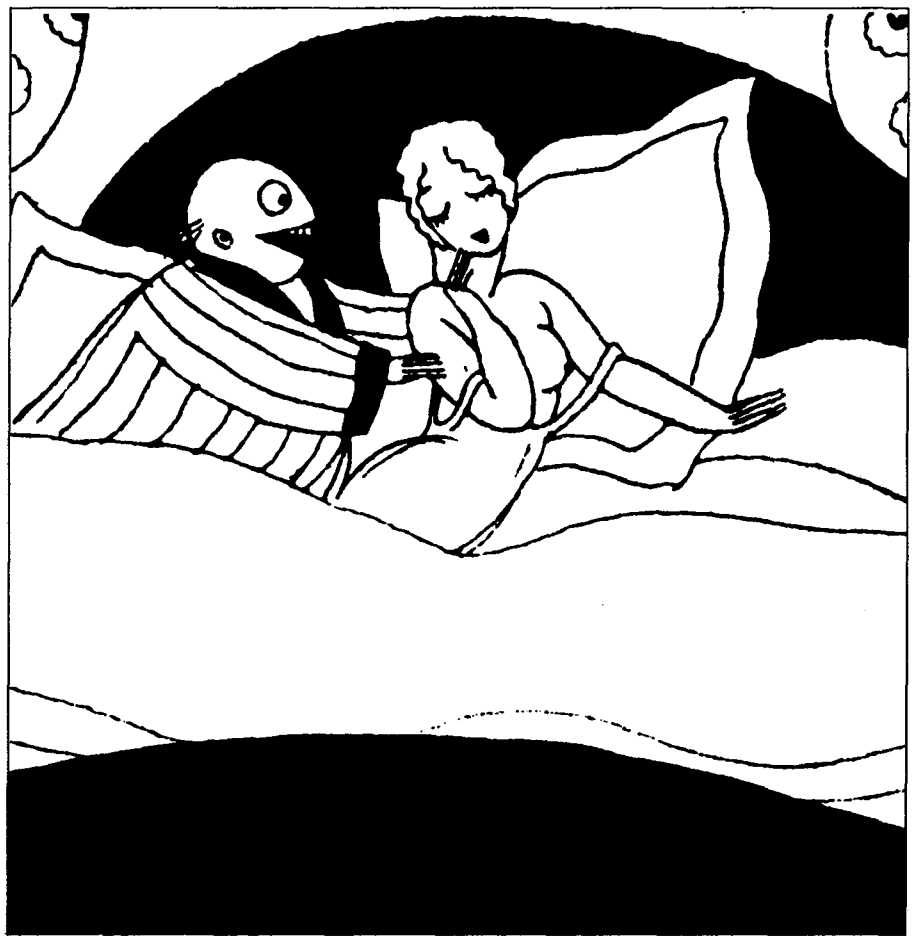
Three photographic items never before published are the centerpieces of Nagel's discussion of the bullet wounds: a frontal X-ray of what appears to be a circular object embedded in Hemingway's right knee, a frontal X-ray of what appears to be a square object embedded in his right foot, and a picture of a deformed bullet found in a World War I coin purse of Hemingway's. Underneath the first of these items, Nagel has written that "the X-ray of Hemingway's right knee reveals a machine-gun bullet but no damage to the patella, confirming what he said in a letter to his father." Underneath the second item, Nagel says that "the X-ray of Hemingway's right foot reveals that a machine-gun bullet had fractured his toe." About the coin-purse bullet, Nagel writes in the preface to the book that "it matches the object [sic] in the X-rays, a matter of significance not so much for medical reasons as for assessing Hemingway's veracity and character."

Kenneth S. Lynn is the author of Hemingway *and other books.*

My study of the three photos, and of Nagel's assertions about them, has benefited immensely from a consultation with two medical school professors of surgery whose expertise in wound ballistics was respectively honed in the service of the British army in World War II and of the American Army in Vietnam.

Both doctors were quick to point out the absence of lateral X-rays that would furnish profiles of the embedded objects. Without that sort of help, they found it impossible to determine whether the round-looking object in Hemingway's right knee was a pellet from a mortar-shell canister or the bottom of a machine-gun bullet. As for the square-shaped object in Hemingway's right foot, both doctors were almost certain, even without a profile shot, that it was not a machine-gun bullet. Their best guess was that it was a piece of mortar-shell casing, for in World War I such casings were often made up of small metal squares. On the question of whether the toe was broken, they saw no displacement in the outline of the bone, but felt unable to make a judgment merely on the basis of a frontal X-ray.

The coin-purse bullet, they said, could easily have been picked up by the young Hemingway almost anywhere (on his convalescent visit in October 1918, for example, to the warred-over vicinity of Bassano del Grappa), so that his possession of it said nothing about his veracity and character. As to whether the bullet matched the object in Hemingway's right knee, there was no way of knowing, they said. The deformation of the coin-purse bullet did prompt them to add, though, that a fully jacketed bullet traveling at normal velocity would have gone straight through Hemingway's body unless it was impeded by contact with bone. To me, this was an interesting bit of information, inasmuch as one of Hemingway's letters from the Red Cross hospital in Milan, where he was taken after he was wounded, described the bullets that he said had struck him as copper-jacketed, and he also made clear to his father that the bullet in his right knee "went under the knee cap . . . and didn't smash it a bit." By adding these details to his initial account of his wounding, Hemingway unwittingly raised further questions about it.



Toward the end of my conversation with the doctors, the veteran of Vietnam observed that there were statistical reasons for doubting that Hemingway had been hit by both shell fragments and bullets. To illustrate his point, he referred to the first 750 wounded Americans whom he had treated in Vietnam. Only twelve of them—a mere 1.6 percent—were the victims of more than one kind of fire. For attacking troops equipped with machine guns usually move forward into firing positions only after the mortars behind them have ceased their bombardments—lest they themselves be hit. The probability is that the Austrian forces at Fossalta were not mixing their modes of fire when Lieutenant Hemingway—and Italian soldiers near him—was felled.

The unqualified conclusions that Nagel draws from photographic evidence that is highly inconclusive (to say the least!) are a measure of the ruthlessness and rigidity of a hidebound mind. But they are not the only measure. For a sexual politics as well as a wound politics is at work in *Hemingway in Love and War.*

Henry Serrano Villard, Nagel's aged co-editor, begins the book with a memoir. As an ambulance driver in Italy in 1918, Villard was stricken with hepatitis and ended up in the hospital room in Milan next to Hemingway's. The principal impression he conveys of good old Ernie is of an innocent kid of nineteen who impetuously fell in love with a pretty American nurse seven

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years his senior, Agnes von Kurowsky. Villard confesses that he himself "came to have a real crush on Aggie," but he never asks himself whether envy of a rival was not the source of his fervent conviction that Agnes largely withheld her sexual favors from Hemingway, even as she completely did from him. When Agnes was eighty-four, Villard further reports, he had a reunion with her in Florida, and it clearly pleases him to tell us that she recalled her relationship with Hemingway as a "flirtation" that had "never gone beyond that."

Other than his concern with the question of how far, physically speaking, Hemingway got with Agnes, Villard evinces no curiosity whatsoever about the nature of the liaison. The same narrowness of focus characterizes Nagel's treatment of the romantic documents in *Hemingway in Love and War*—Agnes's diary from June to October 1918, and her letters to Hemingway. For pages, Nagel goes on worrying about the extent of their lovemaking. He summarizes the opinions of earlier scholars (with spectacular inaccuracy, I might add, in the case of my own study of Hemingway) and argues with them and puts them down. In the end, he delivers himself of the solemn judgment that the lovers went no further than the petting stage—despite the fact that the evidence in the diary and letters is irremediably ambiguous, thereby reducing to absurdity any sort of definite statement about the stage where they stopped. "When I saw that couple on the train yesterday," Agnes wrote to Hemingway on October 16, 1918, "I kept wishing I had you alongside of me, so I could put my head on that nice place—you know—the hollow place for my face—& go to sleep with your arm around me." Did they or didn't they have intercourse? From the genteelly phrased expressions of affection and longing by a well-brought-up young woman born in the Victorian 1890s, how can one possibly tell?

This exasperatingly unrewarding essay might have acquired significance if Nagel had proceeded to deal with the hints of deeply rooted psycho-sexual malaise that were evident in Hemingway's late adolescence. But of course he doesn't. Nagel's Hemingway was maimed by a dirty war and by nothing else.

Last year, Truman Capote's biographer, Gerald Clarke, published an interview with Hemingway's youngest son, Gregory, in which he asked him about the transvestite urges that have plagued him since early childhood. When he was about twelve, Gregory recalled, his father walked in on him while he was wearing a pair of his mother's nylon stockings. Although his father did not utter a word of reproach, Gregory saw on his face "a look of such devastation and horror and, just, yuck. . . . Oh, my God!" A couple of weeks later, his father said to him, "Gig, we come from a strange tribe, you and I." Hemingway's struggles with his own sexual-identity problems began early and lasted late, and key members of the "tribe" in which his personality was shaped were likewise caught in psychological traps.

None of this background information is brought to bear upon the materials in *Hemingway in Love and War*. Thus, Nagel does not relate the age discrepancy between Hemingway and Agnes, which caused her to address him as "dear Boy" or "dear bambino," to his racking obsession with his dominating mother, nor does he point out that Hemingway's mother was the same height, five feet eight, as Agnes and that her chestnut hair was the same color as hers. Similarly, Agnes's notation in her diary that another of the nurses "found one of my yellow hairpins under Hemingway's pillow" fails to elicit any editorial comment about Hemingway's lifelong fixation on hair, as evidenced for instance in his evocation of the sexual-foreplay games in the

IS RELIGION JUST FOR THE IGNORANT?

In many intellectual circles the myth still circulates that religion is the preserve of the dimwitted and unlettered. Yet, recently *The New York Times Magazine* carried an article on the "return to religion" among intellectuals. From Harvard to Berkeley, and amid inquisitive people generally, there's an undeniable renewal of interest in the questions traditional religion raises and seeks to answer. This fascination is largely a result of the failures of secular substitutes for religion (such as rationalism, narcissism, technological utopianism, aestheticism, and extremist political ideologies) to give abidingly satisfying answers to the truly significant puzzles in life: goodness, suffering, love, death, and the meaning of it all.

By no means, however, does this religious renaissance entail embracing the ersatz gods of dog-eat-dog individualism, consumerism, or superpatriotism. Nor does it imply a retreat from working for peace, justice, or human dignity. Rather, there's an awareness that, as Jean Bethke Elshtain put it, religious commitment "can help further social reform," and that religion can supply the ethical bedrock upon which to make political choices which are far more durable than those based on passing ideologies and enthusiasms. Nor does the new openness to religion signify a hostility to science, but rather an appreciation of the limits of science and technology.

The New York Times Magazine article discussed the NEW OXFORD REVIEW as part of this return to religion, and rightly so. We at the NEW OXFORD REVIEW are spearheading today's intellectual engagement with what Daniel Bell terms "the sacred." We are particularly interested in exploring religious commitments that yield humane social consequences, as exemplified by such giants as St. Francis, Gandhi, Bonhoeffer, Barth, Tawney, Schumacher, Mounier, Dorothy Day, Archbishop Tutu, Lech Walesa, Martin Luther King Jr., and Archbishop Romero. And we probe the literary and philosophical riches offered by such greats as Kierkegaard, Tolstoy, Buber, Auden, Eliot, Silone, Maritain, Waugh, Merton, C.S. Lewis, Simone Weil, Flannery O'Connor, and Graham Greene.

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hospital in Milan between Frederic Henry and Catherine Barkley in *A Farewell to Arms*:

> I would take out the pins [says Frederic] and lay them on the sheet and it would be loose and I would watch her while she kept very still and then take out the last two pins and it would all come down and she would drop her head and we would both be inside of it, and it was the feeling of inside a tent or behind a falls.

Nagel is even unmoved by a truly bizarre lie about love that the teenaged Hemingway told. In the spring of 1918, while waiting in New York City to be sent overseas, he startled his family and various friends by announcing that he had bought a costly engagement ring and that he planned to marry the movie actress Mae Marsh, who had risen to stardom in *The Birth of a Nation* (1915). His parents' horrified reaction finally compelled him to admit that he had never met Miss Marsh. "The incident suggests something," Nagel dismissively writes, "of Hemingway's naive interest in the subject of romance and his willingness to invent where it did not exist." In other words, Nagel has no explanation for the incident and is not interested in developing one.

An obvious clue to the puzzle is *The Birth of a Nation*, which Hemingway saw while in high school. Miss Marsh's interpretation of the kid sister of the Confederate colonel, Ben Cameron, is marked by a combination of tomboyish uninhibitedness and a loving intimacy with Ben that almost seems incestuous. Hemingway must have been fascinated to watch her, for he himself was exceedingly close to his beautiful younger sister, Ursula. (When he returned from war in 1919, for example, he and the 17-year-old Ursula fell into the habit of sleeping together in the same bed, without the knowledge, apparently, of the rest of the family.) Furthermore, the dramas of sexual confusion that thronged his mind would eventually lead him to write "The Last Good Country," an extraordinarily revealing story which tells of the sexually charged relationship between Nick Adams and his uninhibited kid sister, Littless, who alternates expressions of her wish to be a boy with proposals that she and Nick get married. Did Mae Marsh's cinematic performance not only remind Hemingway of his sister Ursula, but project into his consciousness a rudimentary image of Littless, which he found so compelling that it triggered the fantasy that the actress had agreed to become his wife? The question does not admit of a definite answer, but at least it exposes the dynamics that were probably involved in the oddest of the many lies told by a tormented young man in 1918. □

THE DIARY OF H. L. MENCKEN

Edited by Charles A. Fecher/Alfred A. Knopf/476 pp. $30

Theo Lippman, Jr.

On November 5, 1930, when he was fifty years and two months old, H. L. Mencken began to keep a diary. During the decade and era that had ended almost exactly one year before, with the great crash of the stock market, Mencken had been as well known as any American, except perhaps the Presidents, movie stars, and athletes. He achieved his notoriety—for that is what it largely was—by writing scathingly about almost everything most Americans valued. His iconoclasm appealed greatly to the young, the literary Bohemians, the disenchanted intellectuals. He wrote his articles for his own magazines, *The Smart Set* and then *The American Mercury*, and for his hometown newspapers, the *Sunpapers* of Baltimore. Many of the things he wrote were printed in other newspapers and collected in books. Much of that is still in print today. Mencken was not a shooting star or a passing fancy. Perhaps just as important as his critical journalism was his editing skill and perspective. If he was anti-American in one sense, he was very much pro-American in another. He encouraged and championed new writers who were creating an American literature that was more native and less dependent on European and especially English antecedents.

For all this—his writing, his editing, his point of view—he was called (by Walter Lippmann) "the most powerful personal influence on this whole generation of educated people." That was in 1926. By 1930, some of his critics and even some of his friends were saying he was through. That is a thought still heard today. In fact, it is probably the dominant thought. The cliché goes like this: Mencken was splendid to read when he was attacking the politicians and institutions of the twenties (Harding, Prohibition), but not when he was attacking those of the thirties (Roosevelt, the New Deal).

But in fact, for the eighteen years covered by this diary begun in 1930, Mencken did more work and more good work than ever before. To begin with, there was his irregular political reporting for the *Sun* and his regular column for the *Evening Sun*. This work was good enough to be proposed by Mark Sullivan for a Pulitzer in 1936 (a proposal Mencken shot down; he thought the prize "trashy"). It was good enough to convince the Hearst newspaper chain to offer him $52,000 a year in 1936—$468,000 in today's dollars—to write for it (an offer he refused because he felt his lot was cast with the *Sunpapers*, where he was also a member of the board). This daily journalism was also enduring enough to make up about a third of the 1956 collection of his *Evening Sun* columns, *A Carnival of Buncombe*. That book is still in print. So are the fourth edition of *The American Language* and its Supplements I and II, which were also written during the diary years. So is the *New Dictionary of Quotations*, also completed in the 1930s. So are *Happy Days*, *Newspaper Days*, and *Heathen Days*, his extraordinary autobiographies which were also written during this period. In addition, Mencken at this time was also writing two other autobiographical works, "Thirty-five Years of Newspaper Work" and "My Life as Author and Editor." Each ran to about 1,800 typed pages, including appendices and indexes. (They are sealed from public view until 1991.)

And he wrote a diary of some 2,000 typed pages. It was sealed until 1981. After much legal and editorial wrangling, a truncated version containing about a third of the original hit bookstores and the front pages at the end of 1989. The finished product may represent the best work Mencken did during this productive period. It is certainly high-class social and literary history, in the gossipy and self-revealing way that only a few diaries of historical value can be said to be. I believe it will forevermore be on the bookshelves of all those who want to write about or just know about the politics, literature, and journalism of the 1930s and 1940s. It will be indispensable to anyone wanting to understand Baltimore of the era. It will be extremely helpful to anyone wanting to know about the city's principal industry, medicine. And about beer. And, most of all, about Mencken.

Let me give you a sense of the people and moments put down in his diary. It begins, "Sara and I went to West Chester . . . to visit the Hergesheimers." Then, skipping through it: "Dinner at Hugh H. Young's house last night. Present: Governor Ritchie, Senator Tydings, President Ames of the Johns Hopkins, Bernard Baruch, Herbert Bayard Swope . . ." "Dinner with Philip Goodman at the Three Stars in 47th street. Good beer. To his house in 10th street later. Present: his wife and daughter, Sinclair Lewis and wife, Franklin P. Adams . . . " "James M. Cain came to the Algonquin to lunch . . . " "Ritchie came in last night to talk about his presidential campaign . . . " "After the concert I picked up Sara at the Algonquin and we went to [the] Knopf apartment. Sara was plainly a great success. Cather, Fanny Hurst and various others made much of her. She looked splendid. . . . Others present: George Gershwin . . . Dashiell Hammett, the writer of detective stories, came in drunk . . . " "William Faulkner, the Mississippian, who came in late, also got drunk . . . " "Ellery Sedgwick, editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, was here for dinner last night . . . " "F. Scott Fitzgerald and his wife were here to lunch yesterday . . . " "Jim Tully came down from New York . . . " "Ellen Glasgow was here to lunch last Sunday . . . " "Bishop James Cannon, Jr., and his wife . . . " "I had dinner last night with Theodore Dreiser . . . " ". . . encountered Roose-

Theo Lippman, Jr. is an editorial writer for the Baltimore Sun.

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velt . . . and we had a pleasant meeting . . . " "I dropped in to see [Gerald L. K. Smith] . . . " "Louis Untermeyer . . . came in to dinner yesterday . . . " "Edgar Lee Masters . . . told me that Dreiser . . . is broke . . . " "Raymond Moley called me up yesterday from New York . . . " "I had a chance to talk with [Thurber]. He is full of curious stuff about Ross . . . " "William Lyons Phelps was here for lunch . . . " "Lunch today at the Maryland Club with Samuel E. Morison . . . " "I made a bet with [Carl] Van Doren . . . " "To Washington today to discuss the situation in Michigan with Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg . . . " "Oscar Garrison Villard dropped off in Baltimore last night . . . " "Dr. F. E. Townsend . . . dropped off in Baltimore yesterday . . . " "From Luchow's Nathan and I went to the Stork Club and there met Walter Winchell . . . " "Our guests were Frank Knox . . . " "I had James T. Farrell, the novelist, to lunch at the Maryland Club . . . " "George S. Schuyler, the Negro journalist, was here last night, and August and I put in a couple of hours palavering with him in Hollins street . . . " "I had lunch with Anita Loos . . . " "I gave a dinner at the Maryland Club last night to Justice Felix Frankfurter . . . " "Manuel L. Quezon . . . T. S. Eliot . . . Arnold Gingrich . . . Samuel Hopkins Adams . . . Abel Green . . . Morris Fishbein . . . Grove Patterson . . . Ezra Pound . . . " and on and on.

Many names won't be familiar to you. One of the best things about this book is that Fecher has done an excellent job of identifying the cast of characters. When Mencken's entry doesn't do the job, Fecher does, as concisely and accurately as could be wished. In almost every entry in which then-famous names are dropped, Mencken adds spice by recounting the conversation at some length or by describing behavior and appearance or by commenting on his companions with the honesty that comes of knowing it will be several decades before the comment will become public. Here is an excerpt from his entry about a weekend in Vermont: "[Sinclair] Lewis disappeared during the afternoon. When he appeared at dinner he was visibly tight. . . . At 4 a.m. the next morning Lewis appeared at the small house and woke up Sara and me. He was in his dressing gown and palpably drunk . . . "

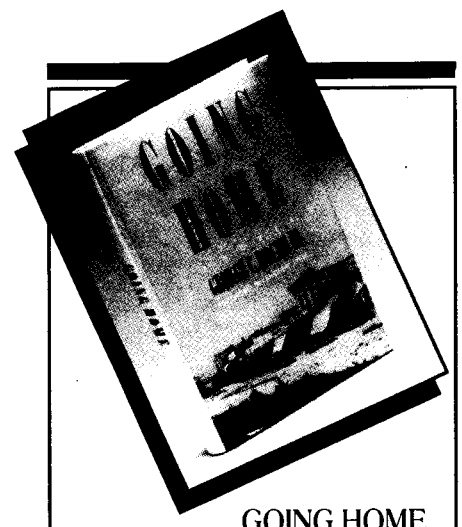
All these comments taken together give us a far better portrait of the commentator than any I have read before. This is the same Mencken described in the biographies and his published autobiographies, but the picture is much clearer, much more focused. What went before was tintype. This is a Nikon job. It reveals, of course, that he could be mean and biting, even cruel, in his thoughts. It reveals, to the surprise of some readers today, that when he blasted away at American (and other) ideas, customs, and heroes, he meant it. But of course! Why this surprises some people today is strange. How could he have been so good at it if he was faking it?

If there is one surprise in the book, it is the revelation of Mencken's romantic, tender soul, his gentlemanliness, his concern for unfortunate people. The romanticism applies to his wife, Sara. She died in 1935, five years after they were married. His subsequent entries on the anniversaries of her death —his thoughts, his descriptions of his visits to her grave—will show you a Mencken you were not quite aware of, one only hinted at in earlier books, even the best ones, dealing with him and Sara. His gentlemanliness is best shown in this explanation of why he will not mention his sexual liaisons: "Such things, it seems to me, are nobody's business. . . . They are in fact not even the author's business." The caring, responsible Mencken is best shown in a long account of his going to the aid of the family of his old housekeeper in a time of tragedy. Some may read this episode and, linking it to some apparently derogatory Mencken comments about blacks, conclude that what I call his generosity and caring are nothing but Southern white paternalism. All I can say to that is, Mencken was the least Southern Marylander who ever lived.

This brings me to what put the diary on the front pages. It is full of "racist" remarks and "anti-Semitism," not to mention gross attacks on poor white Southerners, contempt for President Roosevelt, and a subversive lack of patriotism. So the news stories went. So much of the commentary in the wake of the stories went. The National Press Club in Washington scheduled a meeting of its board to consider un-naming its H. L. Mencken Library. A former winner of the *Sunpapers*' H. L. Mencken Writing Award returned the prize and the $2,500 that went with it, on the grounds that Mencken was now revealed as "bigoted." The *Sunpapers*' president announced he had considered doing away with the award but decided against it. If it hasn't by now, I suggest the Press Club un-name its library —out of respect for Mencken: he loathed the Washington press corps, and made that clear in his published writings as well as in this diary. The *Sunpapers* probably ought to end the awards in the same spirit, considering how Mencken felt about prizes. But if the awards continue, I herewith nominate Russell Baker for the next one. He defended Mencken in a delightful, nononsense column, even while noting that his own kin were among those poor Southern whites who had moved into Mencken's neighborhood and drawn his bitter scorn—they specifically, not poor Southern white immigrants generally.

But even Baker missed the point, it seems to me. He said of ethnic and racial stereotyping that it was common then and thus more or less excusable. It was, but my reading of the diary is of a Mencken no more anti-Semitic and anti-black and anti-poor white than he was anti-everything else. In fact, he could be said, on the basis of the diary and the example of his life, to be relatively pro-Semitic and pro-black. Maybe one or two percent of the diary contains references to Jews and blacks. Most of these are neutral or only mildly suggestive of prejudice: ". . . a Negro portrait painter . . . the colored cook . . . the decent colored people of Baltimore . . . the colored musicians . . . colored factotum . . ." That sort of thing. He writes that he finds blacks superstitious and black women unintelligent, which is probably the worst example of stereotypical thinking about minority groups in the book. (He uses "nigger in the woodpile" once and "niggerish" once.) Blacks who have actually read the diary and/or know something about Mencken's rather lonely encouragement and support of black writers in the 1920s and 1930s, and who know that he was threatened with physical violence on Maryland's Eastern Shore for his anti-lynching columns and was criticized for urging desegregation of the University of Maryland Law School and Baltimore's public tennis courts, have not been as upset over the diaries as have Jews.

Here is what upset them: "brisk, clever Jew . . . French Jewess. Though she is polite, she finds it hard to conceal her distrust of me as a German . . . a young Harvard Jew . . . Like most other young Jewish intellectuals . . . looks decidedly Jewish . . . We had two Jews among the members . . . low-grade Jews . . . the last of the Chosen on the club roll . . . a shrewd Jew . . . a highly dubious Jew . . . The Jew who owns it never spends a cent on decorations . . . The Jews of Hollywood certainly have not given him much money . . . a smart Jew . . . I don't think Kent liked being bracketed with two Jews." Since this is a diary that also includes stinging insults directed at many named individuals, including most notably his good friends and colleagues at the *Sunpapers*, and casually expressed disdain for almost every group, I kept asking myself, as the Jewish shock and outrage manifested itself in letters to the editor and on talk shows, what's going on here? Since in fact many—perhaps most—of Mencken's best friends were Jews, and since he had a long history of working with them and hiring them and socializing with them and praising them in public and in private—and since there is evidence in the book of his discomfort with the anti-Semitism of others—why were so many people so upset? →



GOING HOME
by George Roche

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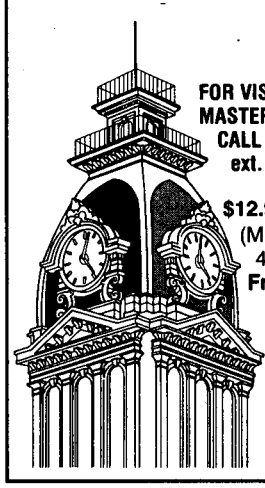

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The only answer I can come up with is that Fecher loaded the dice against Mencken in his introduction and they came up snake-eyes. "Let it be said at once," he writes, "clearly and unequivocally: Mencken was an anti-Semite." He even stoops to quoting a diary entry not published in the book in which Mencken used the word "kikes." Mencken never had a chance, especially with younger journalists and their readers who knew little or nothing about Mencken or his times. I suggested earlier that Fecher had done a good job of identifying old names. In every other respect I think his editing was superb. I read the diary typescript in 1982 and found it tedious, repetitive, and depressing. Fecher's version is much more readable, and offers a much clearer portrait, than the unedited mass. He made the right decisions on what to keep in and what to take out. That is especially true regarding Baltimore and Baltimoreans. Fecher is a self-educated Baltimore native and lifelong resident, like Mencken, and is somewhat simpatico. But this introduction—God!

Fecher devotes five of the nineteen pages of his introduction to his indictment of Mencken as anti-black and anti-Semitic, anti-war and anti-FDR, all of which he slyly links. He says Mencken was no Hitler, but the linkage and the disproportion suggest he feels otherwise. Or wants you to. This is particularly bizarre in light of a book Fecher published back in 1978 in which he drew on a folder in the Enoch Pratt Free Library's Mencken Room archive that contains several pages of anti-Semitic material written but never published by Mencken. Mencken left a note saying that the material was planned for books never written—and that he might decide later not to use it. The material criticized Jews as a group for a number of sins—smugness, rudeness, a lack of patriotism, ruthlessness, and so on. It's not pretty stuff. In fact, it's uglier than anything in the diary. So why Fecher, who wrote in the 1978 book that it did not prove to him that Mencken was anti-Semitic, now changes his mind is an absurd mystery. (I have a nasty theory, which I have confided to my secret diary.) I recommend you skip the introduction and judge Mencken for yourself.

The last word: The folder material was written in 1939. That same year Mencken wrote a column in the *Sun* advocating wholesale entry into the United States of German Jewish refugees. He was one of the few journalists to do so. And, of course, a lot of people who would never say "nigger" or "kike" in public or private made damn sure that policy was never adopted. □

GHOSTS ON THE ROOF: SELECTED JOURNALISM OF WHITTAKER CHAMBERS, 1931-1959

Edited by Terry Teachout/Regnery Gateway/361 pp. $24.95

James Bowman

The roof of the title piece is that of the Livadia Palace in Yalta where, in 1945, the conference which determined the postwar boundaries of Europe was taking place. The ghosts are those of Nicholas and Alexandra, last Tsar and Tsarina of Russia, who have become Stalin's warmest admirers. In conversation with Clio, muse of history, they pay elaborate tribute to the man who, at the scene of triumph over Roosevelt and Churchill, has realized old Russia's most improbable imperial ambitions. What more natural than that they should also show their appreciation for the marvelous revolutionary creed, a creed that makes Machiavelli look like a Mormon, which has made it possible?

That somber little *jeu d'esprit*, now reprinted in this collection of his journalism, was written for *Time* magazine by Whittaker Chambers at the time of the conference itself—when it was not occurring to many observers in the West to see its outcome in this way. And the conceit is a happy one. Because its prescience reminds us that if there were anyone from among the legion of the dead whom we should wish to call back for a chat about the unraveling of the fabric knitted at Yalta, it would be the author of *Witness*, the man who did so much to enable Americans of the mid-century to understand what Communism was about.

What he would tell us may be suggested by another in this collection, a brilliant piece he wrote for *Life* magazine called "The End of a Dark Age Ushers in New Dangers." This was written at the time of the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956, when Khrushchev denounced Stalin. Here he does not doubt Khrushchev's sincerity, but he does point out that the end remains the same even though the means has changed. Stalinism had been a tactic for another era, and one which had been superseded even before Stalin's death. Now, the Stalinist reliance on brute force was to give way to political finesse:

For Communism the problem was how to convert the amorphous sentiments called "internationalism" or "neutralism" from negative to positive forces, from forces merely dividing the West's will to resist Communism into its marching allies. The answer was to refine the cruder forms of Communist aggression, which had produced the favorable power balance, into subtler forms of aggression which the power balance both required and made possible. This is the chief point and thrust of the tactics set forth at the 20th Congress.

In effect, says Chambers, Khrushchev was reforging the popular front of the 1930s, which Stalin had destroyed at the time of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact in 1939. Again, not many people were saying that in 1956, but the subsequent history of the "non-aligned" movement in the Third World and the evolution of the foreign policy of the Social Democratic left in the West show that he was exactly right—about the effect if not the intention of post-Stalinist and pre-Gorbachevian Communism.

Just as Chambers saw the essential continuity between Stalin and Khrushchev, in spite of their tactical differences, so it seems probable that today he would see a similar continuity between Brezhnev and Gorbachev. My own guess is that he would agree with Paul Nitze in pointing to the usefulness of Leninism, independently of most of the Marxist ideology of "Communism," as a tool of conflict management.

If, as Chambers says, victory in the ideological struggle will go to the player "who succeeds in overleaping or bypassing the weapons stalemate, and swinging to his side decisive population masses and their economies now beyond his control" and if, further, Eastern Europe and its Stalinist mechanisms of control had become an embarrassment and an encumbrance to the Soviet side, then it makes sense to see the slimmed down and revamped "Communism" that Gorbachev still vehemently professes as designed to carry on, especially in the Third World, the global struggle whose nature Chambers did so much to make clear to us.

Terry Teachout has organized this book into five sections, which are intended roughly to correspond to phases of Chambers's career. In fact, the reader's sense is overwhelmingly of three epochs: the Communist era of the early thirties, here represented by forty-four pages and really *not* very interesting; the *Time* era, from 1939 to 1948, when he had to make his living by journalism and therefore was led into writing about subjects that he might not have chosen for himself; and the 1950s, after the Hiss case had brought him to national attention,

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when his freedom to write of what he chose had both good and ill effects.

To me the second is much the best reading. The lugubriousness and world-weariness of the last phase, though it is illuminated by frequent flashes of wisdom, is hard to take after a while. The middle period, however, is filled with such delights as his "History of Western Culture" series, which makes a fascinating counterpoint to his thoughts on contemporary history, his reviews of the films *The Grapes of Wrath* and *Ninotchka*, his thoughts on Kafka, Rebecca West, Toynbee, Spengler, and Santayana, his appreciation of Marian Anderson and the Negro Spiritual, and his dialogue with the Devil.

As the editor points out, one of the most striking things about Chambers's contributions to *Time* is how much better the magazine used to be than it is now. In every way—quality of writing, intelligence, insight, historical consciousness, seriousness of mind, even factual accuracy—the *Time* of forty years ago, as represented here by Chambers, was infinitely superior to the *Time* of today.

In fact, it might be instructive to look in more detail at one point of comparison which calls immediate attention to itself. In 1948, the 100th anniversary of *The Communist Manifesto*, Chambers nominated Karl Marx as "Man of the Century"—deliberately playing off the *Time* tradition of nominating every December a "Man of the Year." This past December, his successors in the senior editorial offices did something similar: they nominated Mikhail Gorbachev as "Man of the Decade." If their choice is marred by the fact that Gorby didn't come onto the world scene until halfway through the decade, Chambers's is too, by virtue of the fact that Karl Marx didn't live in this century. Let these two quibbles cancel each other out and let us just compare the two treatments of a similar idea. Chambers begins his piece with a geography lesson. "Marxism" is what divides the earth. Very well, let us explain what we mean by a quick run-through of the earth's major rivers:

> In the lands drained by the Sava, the Bug, the Moskva, the Dnieper, the Don, the Volga, the Yensei and the Amur, a man who wished to express approval—of a painting, a factory production record or a military operation—is likely to call it "Marxist." In the lands drained by the St. Lawrence, the Mississippi, the Orinoco, the Amazon, the Tagus, the Thames and the Clyde, a man who wishes to express disapproval—of a painting, a production record or a military operation—is likely to call it "Marxist."

Chambers's trick here is a deft handling of rhetorical parallelism and a habit, even when he is writing about the most abstract and philosophical of issues, of anchoring his material at every possible point in the firm earth of the specific and the factual.

In the same way, he goes on to make his subject immediately topical—"Marxism last week made men fight in the ragged mountains of Greece"—and to give it a human interest:

> A Shanghai girl student asked a boy to write in her autograph book. Instead of an affectionate personal statement, he wrote: "What is the reason for the existence of people who reap wealth without laboring?" Marx, who guided the Chinese boy's hand, was also last week the most important man in the world's two great centers of power . . .

The only surprise here is that he doesn't tell us the girl's name (even if he had to make one up) and what it means in Chinese. This is journalism with guts. He gives a geographical location and political compass bearings before he attempts the extremely difficult task of explaining how it is that some long-dead egghead is the reason why people in the remotest corners of the earth are shooting each other.

Compare that with the opening of *Time*'s "Man of the Decade" feature, written by Mr. Lance Morrow:

> The 1990s came to an end in what seemed like a magic act, performed on a world-historical stage. Trapdoors flew open, and whole regimes vanished. The shell of an old world cracked, its black iron fragments dropping away, and something new, alive, exploded into the air in a flurry of white wings.

Or not, as the case may be. Possibly we were not attending to the same corner of the field as Mr. Morrow. This is exactly the opposite approach to Chambers's: instead of making the mysterious clear by bringing it down to earth, Morrow makes the clear mysterious by mooning off into a mist of fine writing. Only the fine writing is ludicrously bad. The metaphor of a stage transforming itself into an egg—an egg, it would appear, which is made of iron—that contains a mysteriously full-grown bird (dove? swan? albino pigeon?) is hopelessly scrambled and completely distracting. We are invited to take an interest not in the events in Eastern Europe but in the exotic vision of Mr. Lance Morrow:

> Revolution took on a sort of electronic lightness of being. A crowd of half a million Czechoslovaks in Wenceslas Square would powder into electrons, stream into space at the speed of light, bounce off a satellite and shoot down to recombine in millions of television images around the planet. The transformation had a giddy, hallucinatory quality, its surprises tumbling out night after night.

My, what a lively crowd! Talk about your bouncing Czechs! But ought we delicately to suggest that the "hallucinatory quality" of this curious electron basketball (he powders! he streams! he bounces! he shoots!) has more to do with the self-indulgent peculiarity of the observer than with the events which he is ostensibly helping us to observe?

Moreover, the political judgments are even more giddy. Gorbachev is an "international celebrity and impresario of calculated disorder" who "calls what he is doing—and permitting—a revolution"; he "is playing Prospero in a realm ruled by Caliban for the past 72 years." Anyone who thinks that ought to abandon political analysis and take up autograph collecting.

A bit later on in the magazine, Michael Kramer devotes some 1,700 words to the ineffably silly proposition that Gorbachev is saving Communism just as Roosevelt saved capitalism. Then Strobe Talbott maunders on for 6,000 words under the impression that economic weakness and military strength are incompatible and therefore that the Soviet Union never *did* pose any threat to the West.

Each of these men has an Idea. The fact that it is a Wrong Idea scarcely matters next to the fact of their own fascination with it. What we take away from reading them is nothing that we didn't know before—except the Idea, for whatever it may be worth. What we take away from Chambers, however, is a wealth of information of the classic journalistic kind. We learn not only about Karl Marx's habits of mind but also about his habits of diet and recreation; we are told not only what his friends, critics, and followers thought of him but also something of why they thought it.

What emerges is both a tremendously sympathetic portrait of Marx the man and a dispassionate and deadly accurate account of the poisonous ideology he gave birth to—and its influence on the century. The literacy, imagination, and drama of Chambers's account are all the more striking for being unselfconscious. Somehow, one suspects, it was not just his politics which prevented the new *Time*-stylists from consulting Whittaker Chambers before they undertook to anoint their "Man of the Decade."

One of the last subjects to which Chambers turned his attention in the relatively tranquil later years was that of education. In the midst of the national agonizing which accompanied the launch of the first Russian Sputnik, his was the voice that could be heard to say: "The problem does not turn wholly on the academic processing of what we loosely call 'brains.' It would seem to turn, at least as critically, on the much more difficult problem of what we call loosely 'mind.' " This he defines as including "reflective and creative imagination" but for a more practical demonstration of what he means, read this book. □

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VLADIMIR NABOKOV: SELECTED LETTERS 1940-1977

Edited by Dmitri Nabokov and Matthew J. Bruccoli
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich/582 pp. $29.95

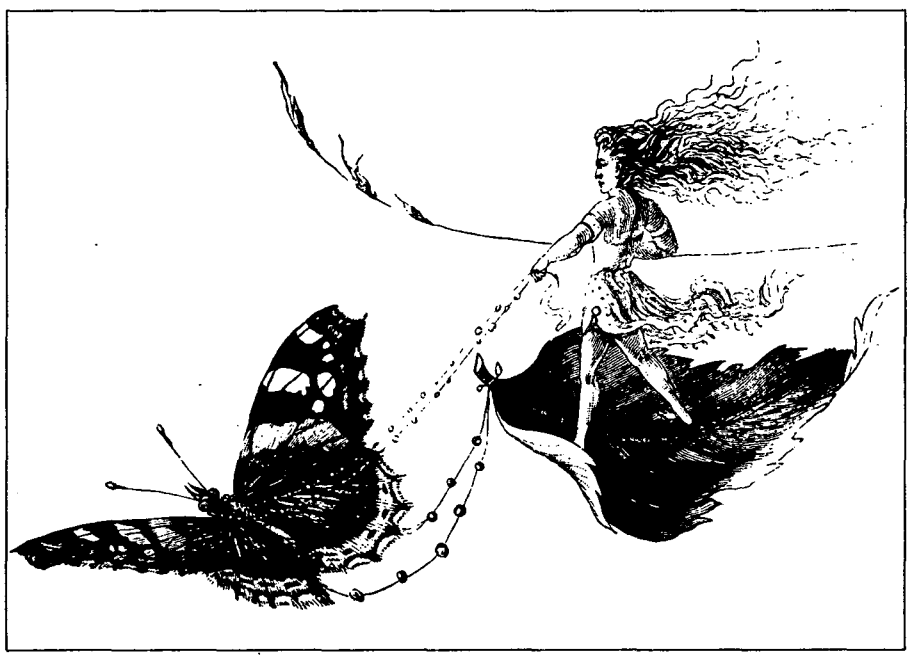
Charles Nicol

The first things one notices about this collection of letters are that the selection and editing are very much a family affair and that it starts not in 1940 but in 1923, maintaining that mild eccentricity often associated with items Nabokovian. Dmitri, who has continued to translate his father's early Russian (and French) works into English (and Italian), and Vera, who handled much of her husband's (English, Russian, French) typing and correspondence, have both contributed substantially. Among the many footnotes supplied by the family, a few "of a personal nature" are signed or initialed; in addition to personal glimpses, these sometimes set up defenses against snipers or supply additional—everything Nabokov wrote has wonderful comic moments—humor, such as the following comment about Nabokov's first American literary agent: "De Jannelli gave little Dmitri Nabokov his first camera, a Kodak Baby Brownie. DN" (which has the tone of Tolstoy's Ivan Ilyich calling himself "little Vanya"). Rachmaninoff gave Dmitri his first radio; much later his father gave him some good prophylactic advice: "In Italy, for his own good, /A wolf must wear a Riding Hood." The last letter in this collection (9 May 1977) is also to Dmitri.

Many of Nabokov's novels are crafted so that a revelation on the last few pages—sometimes even in the last sentence—throws new light on the whole affair, compelling the reader to start over again, now with the pages illuminated by 500 watts instead of a dim bulb. This collection of letters almost has to be read the same way, and its last few pages help explain the dozen pre-1940 (pre-American) letters that constitute its beginning. Thus young Vladimir's first letter, written during a summer of farm labor in the south of France, starts with a two-word salutation to his mother and an annotation. This endearing letter contains a touch of synesthesia ("I took a walk around the plantation, behind the grove of cork oaks, ate peaches and apricots, admired the sunset, listened to a nightingale's twees and whistles, and both its song and the sunset tasted of apricot and peach"), but the Russian facsimile and the English translation are really here to refute one of the wilder claims of Nabokov's first biographer, Andrew Field, that Nabokov addressed his mother Elena Ivanovna by the unlikely diminutive "Lolita." We return to this matter only 500 pages later, in Nabokov's towering reply to Field's "ignoble letter of July 9, 1973" and Dmitri's footnote referring the reader to his own devastating review "Did He Really Call His Mum Lolita?" of Field's biography (*Spectator*-savers may be able to content themselves with mine of January 1987). Later still, Vladimir noted that "I am still at war with Field, who turned out to be a rat."

Four of the early letters are to his wife, and the first footnote to them is one of the few signed with her name: "When my husband was absent from home he wrote me every day. I have suggested four letters from those I received from him in 1937 during our longest 'separation.' Vera Nabokov." Those quotes around *separation* seem to indicate that these vigorous husbandly love-letters are squelching another rumor, this time one originating either in Field's opus or in a gossipy book by Zinaida Shchakovskaya, a Parisian Russian acquaintance not in the index. Still, an unsigned footnote here to "all the Irinas in the world" intriguingly identifies them as "various ladies by that name who flirted with or had designs on VN." Another of these letters to Vera contains the darkest mood of the whole collection, concerning Vladimir's—VN's—radiation treatments for psoriasis: "You know—now I can tell you frankly—the indescribable torments I endured in February, before these treatments, drove me to the border of suicide—a border I was not authorized to cross because I had you in my baggage." (Vladimir and John Updike—our most famous current psoriatic—considerably admired each other's works. Was there a kind of dermal sympathy? No wonder VN was especially fond of *The Centaur.*)

In general, this collection seems to contain too many letters to editors and publishers, especially in regard to *Lolita*; VN's increasingly desperate search for a publisher doubtless needs documentation, as does the struggle for rights with its slime-slippery first publisher, but we seem to have more an exhaustion than a selection, and the dozen pages devoted to three lists of proof corrections are surely of interest only to the extremely dedicated Nabokovian. Perhaps stalwart, formidable Dmitri, who tends to overwhelm his father's critics, has been overzealous: Would VN himself have included all this material? After all, nobody doubts his extreme care for his texts, and this is certainly made clear again in his explanations to Katharine A. White of the *New Yorker* of minute details in shorter works: "Low boy file *is* the right term. See Beckley-Cardy's (Chicago) School Buyer's Guide of Furniture-Supplies-Equipment, Catalog No. 96, School year 1953-1954. Administrator's edition, p. 17, No. D 250, 'all-in-one lowboy file,' illustr." He even gave thorough instructions ("I am sending you some photographs of Pnin-like Russians, with and without hair, for a visual appreciation of the items I am going to discuss") for Milton Glaser's extraordinary portrait on the dust jacket of *Pnin*. Most of these letters to editors contain items of considerable interest, such as evaluations of his own works, or comedy, such as the handwritten ending of a short note to White: "This is the *first* letter I have typed out myself in my life. Took me 28 minutes but came out beautifully." Better yet, one tries to imagine the reaction of James Laughlin (editor and proprietor of New Directions) upon, after VN's butterfly-collecting visit, receiving a letter asking him to collect two types of plants from areas designated on an enclosed map, plus a few ants: "Kill the ants with alcohol or carbona or any other stuff handy (just drown them, do not squash) and put them into a small box with cotton wool."



Then there are the projects that fell through during his leaner years in America, including a revised, annotated *Anna Karenin* (as VN would have it) and, amazingly enough, a proposed translation of *The Brothers Karamazov.* And it's too bad that the article *Life* proposed on his butterfly-collecting was dropped: "I take it for granted that your photographer is prepared to do some crawling and wriggling and to ignore completely the possible presence of snakes." He even submitted a Burma Shave jingle.

Occasionally his strong opinions give a salutary jolt, as in his 1945 letter to a local Reverend, refusing to let Dmitri participate in a clothing drive for German children: "When I have to choose between giving for a Greek, Czech, French, Belgian, Chinese, Norwegian, Russian, Jewish or German child, I shall not choose the latter one." His absolute rejection of Nazi and Soviet totalitarian regimes was based on a lifetime of painful experience, but sometimes went to surprising lengths, as when he abruptly cancelled a planned collaboration with fellow émigré and well-known linguist Roman Jakobson, presumably ending their acquaintance as well: "Frankly, I am unable to stomach your little trips to totalitarian countries, even if these trips are prompted merely by scientific considerations." We should also remember his dismissals of quite a few famous writers, as in his accepting an invitation from the *New York Times Book Review* in 1949 to "do an occasional review. I have been waiting for a long time to take a crack at such big fakes as Mr. T. S. Eliot and Mr. Thomas Mann." (He took on Jean-Paul Sartre instead.)

Fame brought its own problems: autograph hounds, interviewers, biographers, scholars. He had to keep refusing honorary degrees. Occasionally his renown could be used to advantage:

Charles Nicol, who teaches English at Indiana State University in Terre Haute, is currently editing a study of Nabokov's short fiction.

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although he refused to join a committee to support a Soviet writer incarcerated in a mental hospital, he sent a telegram of protest to Leningrad; the writer, Vladimir Maramzin, was allowed to emigrate soon afterward. Similarly, VN privately considered Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn a heroic figure but "not . . . a great writer," and was distressed when casual remarks to this effect were made public. When Solzhenitsyn was allowed to emigrate, VN turned down a public proposal from the *New York Times Magazine* ("he regrets he cannot write a 'letter to Solzhenitsyn' "); privately he had already written just such a letter of welcome. He sent a get-well telegram to Lyndon Johnson after the President's surgery. But as might be expected, he kept up his scientific correspondence with lepidopteral colleagues.

These are delightful letters. All that they lack is the kind of intense intellectual debate found in the *Nabokov/Wilson Letters*; VN doesn't seem to have found a correspondent to replace his old friend. This collection does reprint Nabokov's side of later public exchanges and one last comment included with his refusal to contribute to a volume of essays on Wilson (the letter is signed by Vera): "Psychologically it would be very difficult for VN to ignore in a biographic paper the Pushkin controversy which revealed not only ignorance of Russian on EW's part, but also a bizarre animosity that he appears to have been nursing since the late nineteen-fifties." Perhaps Nabokov's correspondence with fellow émigrés has more intellectual echoes of the Wilson letters; a collection from the earlier European years is promised. □

STRAIGHT SHOOTING: WHAT'S WRONG WITH AMERICA AND HOW TO FIX IT

John Silber/Harper & Row/336 pp. $22.50

William H. Nolte

John Silber should never have allowed his publisher (I assume the blame should be placed there since publishers are notorious for their lack of probity when it comes to merchandizing their wares) to use as subtitle to *Straight Shooting* such an inanity as "What's Wrong With America and How to Fix It." It's hard to imagine that Silber, a man of wide learning, a trained logician who respects the language and has an abiding interest in distinguishing between fact and error, between the obviously untrue and what the rational mind perceives as truth—in short, not a man readily susceptible to buncombe of any sort—should have permitted, without protest, such an outrageously inflated claim to be printed on the dust-jacket and title-page of what is in fact a pretty good book. By no means a great book, not the sort to make the judicious sing hallelujah or shout eureka, but a tome that has its moments, that steers a steady course, that does a good deal more than mouth the current platitudes (though it has a few of those, too) about the various and sundry ailments afflicting the body and soul of the Republic—or of what was once a republic before going down the inevitable road to empire. But I am too besotted with qualifications, with a schoolmarmish demand, if you will, for precision. Suffice it to say that *Straight Shooting* falls far, far short of fulfilling the promise of that humorless subtitle.

And while on the clef note of humor (or the humorless), it seems to me apparent that only a humorist—someone with the bitter insight of a Swift, an Ambrose Bierce, or a Mark Twain, or the gargantuan waggery and iconoclasm of a Mencken—is capable of providing a just appraisal of the Great American Follies, of what one of our greatest poets referred to half a century ago as "the immense vulgarities of misapplied science and decaying Christianity" (but then Jeffers was describing Western civilization in general and not just America). In a memorable poem, "Shine, Perishing Republic," written in the 1920s, Jeffers described an America settling "in the mould of its vulgarity, heavily thickening to empire . . ." Unlike the vast majority of the condemners of our second-rateness in that decade, much like the one now swirling to a close, Mencken reveled in what he revealed, adamantly refusing to allow bad news or his shabby surroundings to disturb his peace of mind. He began his famous essay "On Being an American" (1922) by explaining why he remained at home when so many of his compatriots were fleeing the shambles for fairer lands, intent on throwing off the curse forever. Quite simply, he remained "on the dock, wrapped in the flag, when the Young Intellectuals set sail" since only here could the conditions for his happiness be so fully met. And to be happy, he noted (reducing the thing to its elementals), he had to be:

a. Well-fed, unhounded by sordid cares, at ease in Zion.
b. Full of a comfortable feeling of superiority to the masses of my fellow-men.
c. Delicately and unceasingly amused according to my taste.

With those conditions in place, he readily (and logically) concluded that it would be impossible for a man of his "general weaknesses, vanities, appetites, prejudices, and aversions" to live in These States and *not* be happy. His delirious indictment of that delirious time needs hardly the change of a word to suit our own generation of swine, to borrow Hunter Thompson's apt phrase. Then, neatly in place, follow the three "conditions," fleshed out in a rhetoric that, after all these years, still delights me:

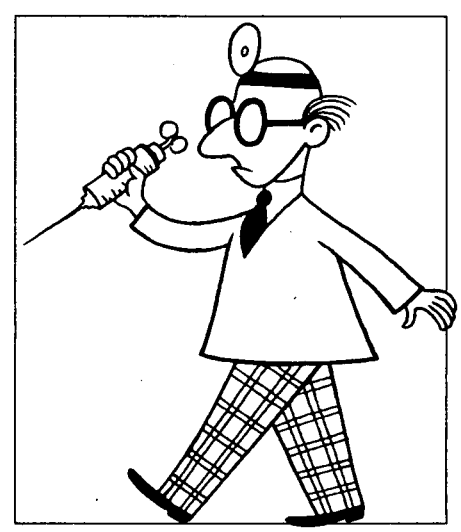
Here the business of getting a living, particularly since the war brought the loot of all Europe to the national strong-box, is enormously easier than it is in any other Christian land—so easy, in fact, that an educated and forehanded man who fails at it must actually make deliberate efforts to that end. Here the general average of intelligence, of knowledge, of competence, of integrity, of self-respect, of honor is so low that any man who knows his trade, does not fear ghosts, has read fifty good books, and practices the common decencies stands out as brilliantly as a wart on a bald head, and is thrown willy-nilly into a meager and exclusive aristocracy. And here, more than anywhere else that I know of or have heard of, the daily panorama of human existence, of private and communal folly—the unending procession of governmental extortions and chicaneries, of commercial brigandages and throat-slittings, of theological buffooneries, of aesthetic ribaldries, of legal swindles and harlotries, of miscellaneous rogueries, villainies, imbecilities, grotesqueries, and extravagances—is so inordinately gross and preposterous, so perfectly brought up to the highest conceivable amperage, so steadily enriched with an almost fabulous daring and originality, that only the man who was born with a petrified diaphragm can fail to laugh himself to sleep every night, and to awake every morning with all the eager, unflagging expectation of a Sunday-school superintendent touring the Paris peep-shows.

After then pausing to admit that "a certain sough of rhetoric may be here," Mencken went on to examine the present and recent past of his beloved homeland with a wit and wisdom seldom approached by an American of his time. Other writers of the period around the First World War were equally harsh and even more gloomy in their assessment not only of America but of Western civilization, which was depicted by Oswald Spengler, among others, as already far gone in its decline. Who could ever forget the notion, expressed in that period, that America might well be the first powerful nation in history to move from barbarism to degeneration without the usual interval of civilization? In the work of Henry and Brooks Adams there was gloomy prophecy—and some very bad guesses as to specifics. In the preface to his *Character and Opinion in the United States* (1921), George Santayana said serenely what others tended to say in anger and dismay: "Civilization is perhaps approaching one of those long winters that overtake it from time to time. A flood of barbarism from below may soon level all the fair works of our Christian ancestors, as another flood two thousand years ago leveled those of the ancients. Romantic Christendom—picturesque, passionate, unhappy episode—may be coming to an end." But such a catastrophe, he added, was no reason for despair, given the fact that "even if the world lost its memory it could not lose its youth."

Moving forward half a century to *The Passing of the Modern Age* (1970), John Lukacs, a Hungarian-born historian, described the spirit of the age in a way that now seems almost fashionable:

By the middle of the 1960s most people of the Western World, even in America, felt the prevalence of despair. This was a new experience for civilized mankind, especially for Americans. In Europe there reigned cynicism and calculation, something that to many people of the Old World was at least not entirely unfamiliar. Americans were beset by the fatal flaw of their mental habits, their tendency to state human problems wrongly. They were preoccupied with the persistence of violence whereas their problem was the re-emergence of savagery. It seemed that this once Indian land may have left a curse on its conquerors. In more and more places American civilization was succumbing to the temptations of a motorized and drugged witches' sabbath, at the edges of which reappeared the impassive savage ghost of the Indian.

In any event, the old things and beliefs were now beginning to go very fast. In many ways the end of the Modern Age, of the



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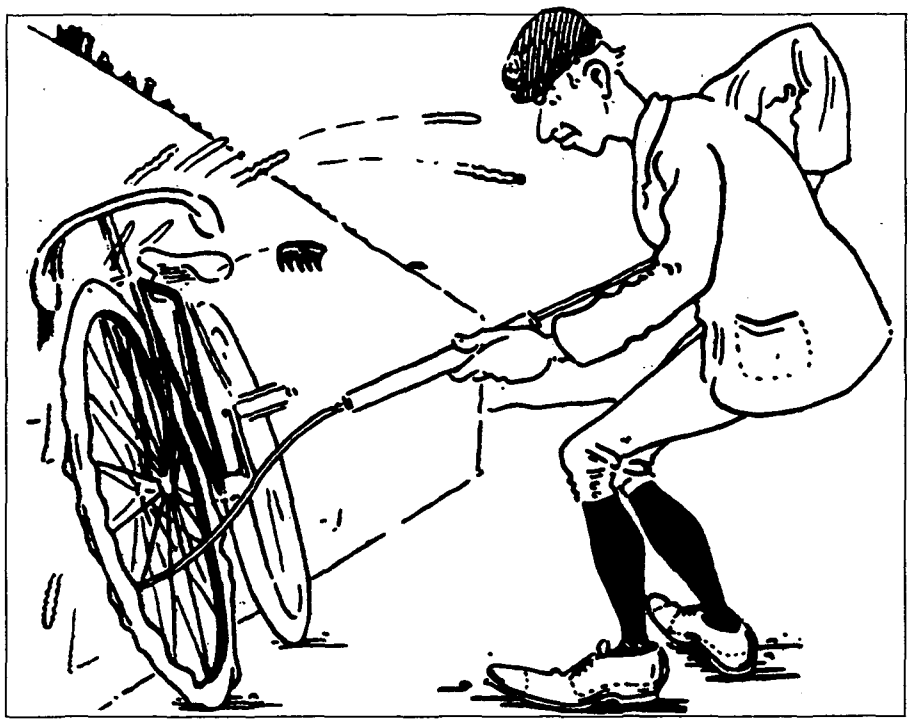
only civilization that some of us have known, began to set in. . . . The monstrosity of government, the impotence of Powers, the separation of races, the conformity of nations, the purposelessness of society, the fiction of prosperity, the dissolution of learning, the meaninglessness of letters, the senselessness of the arts, the destruction of nature, the decay of science, the faithlessness of religion, the mutation of morality were, all, at hand.

In more recent studies, Lukacs, a prolific writer who deserves a wider audience than he has got, has told us a great deal about the contemporary world—always the hardest age to see clearly—in such volumes as *1945: Year Zero* (1978) and *Outgrowing Democracy: A History of the United States in the Twentieth Century* (1984).

But I forget John Silber and his *Straight Shooting*. What does he have to add to the chorus of lamentation now so loud in the land? How does he support, qualify, or refute such ballyhooed tomes as, for example, *The Closing of the American Mind* and *Cultural Literacy*? Oddly enough, since the first half of his book concerns education—more specifically, what's going on in the schools at all levels—he never mentions either of those books, and barely touches on the problems they explore. Rather, he laments the absence of moral instruction in today's schools, and reminds us, somewhat platitudinously, that "if there is to be effective moral education, it must begin in early childhood." He concludes that first chapter: "We must quickly come to terms with our unavoidable imperfections and with the unavoidable imperfections of our institutions. We must find it possible to live happily in an imperfect world with self-confidence and joy, for there is *stern reality* [my italics!] to be faced and *much hard work to be done* [still my emphasis!]. We must join with one another to build a sounder foundation than pleasure, a foundation of enduring happiness that . . ." But enough, God help me, before I sprout wings and take flight from earth altogether.

In the next chapter, "Teachers in a Troubled Society," there is, alas, more of the same. There Silber expatiates on five "crucial issues," one after the other: the decline of the family, loss of respect for teachers, loss of "moral understanding and of moral focus in teaching young people," misguided programs of bilingual education, and the assumption that money will solve these problems. Not much is said about any of those issues that doesn't verge on the obvious. We all know by now, for instance, that our schools of education have been an almost unrelieved disaster. A few people were aware of that fact from the beginning—when Teachers College of Columbia University, the most infamous of the pedagogic zoos, started up its boilers and began erupting smoke back in the heady days following the First World War; and in the four decades since the end of World War Two it has become obvious that educational courses, as Silber says, have little to do with education. Arthur Bestor created something of a stir with his *Educational Wastelands* (1953), but now the "educationist" joke is so stale that it hardly warrants retelling.

Silber is at his best, it seems to me, in further exploding the myth that spending more money, especially federal funds, on education will lead to better schools. As he shows with examples, the best schools are those funded by local taxes, as in New Hampshire, where students score well above the national average in SATs despite the fact that the average salary of teachers in that state ranks forty-second in the nation. Which reminds me of a conversation I once had with Malcolm Muggeridge in which he noted that he looked forward to the day when the entire national budget would go to education—at which time we would have succeeded in attaining total illiteracy. A bit hyperbolic, to be sure, but still a point worth considering.



In the next chapter, Silber lectures us on the need we all have for heroes as models (and in the lecture I hear Walt Whitman singing). Here he also places himself on the right—that is, the publicly approved—side of the demos when he argues that in a democracy the lower orders (my term) are all "a dime a dozen, and they are magnificent," and then adds for effect: "The great fact about human beings is that we are both dime a dozen and magnificent." And once more, driving the nail out of sight: "The genius of democracy is found in this paradox: that we are all a dime a dozen and that we are all magnificent." I happen to disagree, but then it's disagreements that make for horse races. We just differ in our tastes. *De gustibus non est disputandum*. I can argue, however, that Silber is playing fast and loose with logic in such sentences as these: "Virtue is within the reach of us all, for some of the least educated are good. Happiness is within the reach of anyone, for some of the poorest are happy." The generalizations are *not* proved true by the examples given—or else I have forgotten my Aristotle. In any case, such declamations would be more appropriate in a lecture to a Rotary or an Optimist Club than in a serious book. But things get better in his chapters on "Education and Democracy in the Age of Television" and "Academic Freedom and Civilization."

In the second of the book's three major divisions, Silber concerns himself with university affairs, and is hence on home territory and can speak from practical experience. For the person who knows little about the world of academe, which is to say for almost everyone who is not either a professor or an administrator, these five chapters will be instructive, particularly the chapter on "Poisoning the Wells of Academe," wherein Silber recounts some of the more obnoxious antics of the "radicals" in the sixties and early seventies who in the name of Freedom helped transform the so-called halls of learning into something not far removed from monkey houses. Along the way he takes the opportunity to pay off a few old scores against various of the Jacobins who pestered him in his early days as an administrator. He stops well short though of arraigning "higher education" in general for what in fact it now is: a business, like any other, whose primary concern is the making of money. And money can be made only so long as the myth, a myth peculiar to this century, that everyone is educable is kept alive. To ensure that the myth be maintained it has of course been necessary to lower standards—to demand little or nothing from those who are able and willing to pay the enormous costs of what is referred to as "getting an education."

Above all, I wish that Silber had said something about the obvious fact that we have far too many students in our colleges and universities. But then he is a university president (of Boston University) and hence cannot be expected to be candid about that fact. In his secret heart he may agree with Thomas Jefferson that education is by its very nature selective, "the peculium of a well-sifted elite," to use the polished phrase of Albert Jay Nock, but for one in his position to espouse openly any such belief would be tantamount to committing suicide. In fact, he is overly selective in his criticism of the professoriate in general. Aside from a few remarks about the lowering of standards, the need for the faculties to correct themselves (which, needless to say, they will never willingly do), and the observation that resentment is "an academic vice, perhaps *the* academic vice," he seems almost oblivious to the fraudulence now endemic in higher education. For a judicious (and juicy) examination of that fraudulence, one can do no better than consult Charles Sykes's *ProfScam: Professors and the Demise of Higher Education* (Regnery Gateway).

In his third and final section, entitled "Lessons Out of School," Silber discourses on such varied topics as the War on Poverty (and how it has gone awry), on the abortion issue, on the failure of the Head Start program to rescue children from the disastrous factors, in particular television, that now condition them from infancy, on the need to restore the Kennedy Doctrine in Central America, on the need to maintain a powerful military force, and so on. In "The Litigious Society," by far the most incisive chapter of his book, he takes a hard look at our legal system, and how that system has encouraged, even made inevitable, the enormous growth of the number of lawyers in the country. As their numbers increase—and we have four times as many lawyers per capita as any European nation, and the number of lawyers in Japan is smaller than the number we graduate from our law schools each year—so too will the number of rules, regulations, codes, and laws increase. All of which in turn creates a need for more lawyers. In all cases of law, no matter how frivolous, the lawyers, and as often as not *only*

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the lawyers, stand to benefit. The examples Silber gives of lawyers at work—i.e., engaged in picking the pockets of the rest of us, and of institutions in particular—will cause any reader to question the notion that we are a nation of laws. Unlike physicians, who employ their skills in trying to cure patients, lawyers, "through their dominant role in legislatures and regulatory commissions, are engaged in creating new rules, torts, and crimes, new occasions for litigation. That is, they are busily engaged in the equivalent of creating new diseases and in applying themselves as leeches to the body politic." After proposing various solutions to this problem, Silber finally admits that, short of a major political upheaval, nothing much can be done: "Why should the lawyers who make the law throw away a good thing? We already expect them to be more intelligent than the average, and it would clearly be unreasonable to expect them to be more virtuous." He concludes his somber assessment by offering, in the tradition of Jonathan Swift, a modest proposal in the form of a simple constitutional amendment:

> Admission to the bar of any court of the United States, or to any bar of any of the several states, shall be an absolute disqualification for candidacy for election to either branch of the legislature of the United States, or to either branch of the legislature of any of the several states, provided, that no sitting member of any of the several legislatures when this amendment shall be ratified shall be removed from office or prohibited from standing for reelection. In addition, no lawyer shall be the director of any regulatory agency.

Such a proposal, he reminds us, "is no more extreme and far more benign than the legal reform proposed by Dick the Butcher in Shakespeare's *Henry VI*: 'First thing we do, let's kill all the lawyers.' "

In his conclusion Silber goes back over the list of follies into which our society has fallen. Still, he admits to being "deeply optimistic" about the future. He rests his optimism on the growing dissatisfaction "with hedonism and materialism as a way of life" and on the growing awareness that our schools are ripe for reform. I confess that I have not seen enough such dissatisfaction to cause me to hope that any change for the better is near at hand.

Incidentally, Silber's interest in running for governor of Massachusetts, on the Democratic ticket, may explain his unwonted temperance, his refusal to be as harsh as one might expect, in *Straight Shooting*, which, now that I think of it, gives off the odor of a campaign book. In any case, the odor is not offensive. □

CORRESPONDENCE

(continued from page 7)

abortion pill), require Title X recipients to treat abortion as just another birth control option, and fund more school-based sex clinics (where minor children can get free contraceptives, pregnancy tests, and abortion referrals without parental knowledge or consent).

Many thanks to Tom Bethell—one of the finest journalists in the English-speaking world—for alerting *American Spectator* readers (particularly those registered to vote in the state of Utah) to Senator Hatch's treason.

—Lucy Rudenborg
Menomonie, Wisconsin

Orwell the Socialist

It pains me greatly to inflict upon these pages a letter of scant humor, but I am moved to write by Christopher Caldwell's review of John Rodden's book *The Politics of Literary Reputation: The Making and Claiming of "St. George" Orwell* (*TAS*, December 1989).

Mr. Caldwell is evidently miffed that socialists, and Irving Howe, feel comfortable claiming the Blair/Orwell persona as one of their own. Well, the guy was a socialist. There's no way around it. If you read his essays and letters, instead of other people's books about him, it's obvious. He says so (okay, maybe not in so many words, but it is clear). Even Mr. Caldwell calls *The Lion and the Unicorn* a socialist manifesto—and it is.

It's true, Orwell held little brief for pansies, sandal-wearers, or pacifists, but this is insufficient to disqualify him from the basic charge, sad as it is. He also thought that Hitler and Stalin had the same thing for brains, but he is still not absolved.

Mr. Caldwell makes much of the fact that Norman Podhoretz ably staked out Orwell for the neoconservative camp. Indeed, Orwell said many things about Communists, socialists, feminists, and National Socialists that neoconservatives could agree with, as well as some things that they shouldn't. That they are willing to overlook his rather woolly economics says something nice about neoconservatives—they recognize that sometimes he didn't know what he was talking about.

So it is quite likely that Orwell would get along with Norman Podhoretz and his friends—there are many road-crossers in the neoconservative camp and they are of necessity forgiving of past transgressions. But there is absolutely no contradiction contained therein. The downright reasonableness of Orwell is evident throughout his writing, and it is easy to imagine him being popular with a number of crowds—especially the Radical Society, which Tom Bethell wrote about in the December number as well.

So I don't understand Mr. Caldwell's plaintive tone. Even if Orwell was a socialist, it's okay to like him. And suppose I'm completely out to lunch on this and he wasn't occasionally misguided—so what? Let the socialists claim him. Maybe in a few years they'll be claiming Elliott Abrams.

—Finn Poschmann
Ottawa, Ontario

Dreams and Schemes

We acknowledge the idealism in our goal to root out the anti-democratic influence that Big Money exercises over the American electoral system. But the dichotomy between *idealism* and *realism* that Robert Stowe England (in "Coming to Terms With Campaign Reform," *TAS*, November 1989) uses to make us seem like impractical dreamers is a false one. Opponents of reform may not be idealists; but an absence of idealism does not then make them into realists. Those who believe that we can continue to allow moneyed interests to run roughshod over our electoral system without suffering grave consequences to our political stability do not understand the inexorable processes of political change and underestimate the power of the democratic idea now sweeping the world. The aspiration for democratic participation that is now invigorating the political cultures of totalitarian countries of both the left and the right draws inspiration from our own past struggles for democratic reform. As sure as the earth is round, the democratic wind will soon be blowing over our shores.

It isn't only that the American political system is becoming less competitive, as England states (while the idea of political competition and diversity is growing in strength everywhere else). Also of significance is the fact that Fat Cats, PACs, bundlers, and fund-raisers have become power brokers like the party bosses of old, pre-selecting candidates, shaping policy, and determining the ideological limits of public debate.

The resulting crisis—a crisis because more than half of the electorate no longer believes it worthwhile to vote—cannot be addressed by partial (and usually partisan) piece-meal reform. Tinkering with the system creates new loopholes as old ones are plugged, as most tinkerers cynically know. Thus, we advocate the prohibition of financial contributions from moneyed interests in all federal election campaigns and a system of public funding to make elections more competitive and democratic.

Congress, of course, is not likely to legislate meaningful reform without the heat of grassroots pressure. To acknowledge that such pressure does not now exist is not to say that it cannot be created. Corrupting patterns of campaign finance have an impact on every public policy area. People can be educated to understand how moneyed interests dominate the electoral process and, by doing so, impinge on their own opportunities for political influence and a better life. As for the hundreds of millions of dollars that it would cost to totally finance all congressional and presidential elections, that would represent a savings to the ordinary taxpayer when compared with the hundreds of billions of dollars in bail-outs, tax-breaks, subsidies, regulatory exemptions, and other forms of special interest legislation that the moneyed interests gain for themselves.

England closes his article with an appeal for Madison-like moderation. With due respect for James Madison's political acumen, Tom Paine is a more appropriate inspiration given the crisis in our democratic system. As he wrote in *Common Sense*, "A long habit of not thinking a thing *wrong*, gives it a superficial appearance of being *right* and raises at first a formidable outcry in defence of custom. But the tumult soon subsides. Time makes more converts than reason."

—Marty Jezer
Study Group on Electoral Democracy
Deerfield, Massachusetts

Robert Stowe England replies:

When I divided the non-partisan views on campaign finance into idealists and realists, I was not attempting to make one side appear to be all right and the other all wrong, or even one naive and the other one wise. Both have something to bring to the public debate. The idealists offer perhaps the most important contribution, the correct indictment; that is, our system of democratic representation in Congress is being destroyed by the present financing scheme. The realists are right on another score: reform schemes perform differently in practice than in theory. These realists are by no means opposed to campaign finance reform, as Marty Jezer suggests, but they do have a healthy fear of change that makes them sound as if they oppose genuine reform. They, in fact, would like a better system, too, but are afraid the reformers will make it worse, as they did in 1974.

In striving for the rebirth of the American democracy, I believe we should listen to what the hard-nosed realists are saying when we put together a reform package. This means imposing limits in some places, and removing limits in others. The secret is knowing which to keep and which to throw away. Tom Paine would have called such folk wisdom common sense. □

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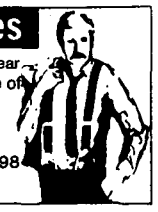

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CURRENT WISDOM

Washington Post

George F. Will contributes to the great tradition of malaise in America rhetoric made famous by the incomparable James Earl Carter of Cross Road, Georgia:

A less mild assessment of Bush's Year One is that his administration illustrates—in a sense is—the echoing emptiness at the core of contemporary politics. Its intellectual and moral flaccidity reflect (we do indeed have representative government) the sagging of America deeper into a peripheral role abroad and self-indulgence at home.

[January 21, 1990]

Los Angeles Times

Hollywood director Oliver Stone's bablative proof that he is *au fond* a lifetime graduate student at the Department of Speech and Theater at U. Cal., Berkeley, now and forever:

"The vandals are at the gate . . . We have a fascist security state running this country . . . Orwell did happen. But it's so subtle that no one noticed. If I were George Bush I'd shoot myself. Existentially there's no hope. His soul is dead."

[December 17, 1989]

Mirabella

"Inward solitude," "Otherness," "internalization," worlds splitting open, "Amazon phalanxes emanating"—all this and more from Prof. Harold Bloom, a Yale Deconstructionist and reformed frotteur:

If our nineties are indeed going to be a vertigo of contrary impulses, it seems clear that intellectually committed women will suffer most from these contending drives. Representative of the spirit of the age, these women will be at once more impatient with things as they are, and more constrained by an inward solitude. The truly permanent movement to emerge from the sixties was a reborn feminism, and the center of that movement was a denial of the male romanticism that proclaimed the Otherness of women. Of all the movements in the American 1960s only feminism has the capacity to renew the exuberance manifested during that decade. If the initial feminist drive of thirty years ago has subsided, it is replaced by greater sophistication and consequent internalization. The poet Muriel Rukeyser once asked: "What would happen if one woman told the truth about her life? The world would split open." Perhaps it is not the world that will split open in the nineties, but rather those women who quest too passionately to tell the truth about their lives. One can see fresh phalanxes of such women emanating from our universities even as I write, and their struggle will animate the nineties.

[January 1990]

Vanity Fair

Shakespeare's people exposed by that hormonal Hollywood genius, Miss Ellen Barkin, as translated by a factotum at *Vanity Fair*:

Few things bum her out more than the idea that American actors are inferior to English actors and that English actors are the best in the world. "They're certainly not the best film actors in the world," she says. "They don't have one movie star. Sean Connery is not English. But, you know, I don't think they know how to act at all. And I would have to extend that to I don't think they know how to act onstage at all. It's easier to trick people onstage because they're far away. I mean, just the logistics of it, you know. And I think when you've got a movie camera this close up into somebody's face . . . to my mind's eye, if they're not feeling it, I know it. If it's hollow, I know it. And as an audience member, I know it. Not just as an actor.

"Where is their Marlon Brando? I mean, we'll start at the top and go down. Where's their Robert De Niro? Where's their Al Pacino? Where's their anyone? Where's their Meryl Streep? Where's their Jessica Lange? Where's their Debra Winger? Like, where are their great movie actors? We have millions of them in this country, ones that aren't even movie stars. I'm not talking just about movie stars. You know, you know, where's their Robert Duvall?"

[February 1990]

PEN Newsletter

Authoress Tama Janowitz, last seen hawking Rose's Lime Juice in a glamorous advertisement with the roguish Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., gets the support of Mama Janowitz in the influential newsletter of PEN:

This is in regard to your transcript on book reviewing that appeared in PEN Newsletter #69.

As a mother, I am tired of the rude, personal remarks made about my daughter Tama, whose name these days appears to be an easy cliché, a synonym for "celebrity." Celebrity is an abstraction; I believe in this case it is meant to connote something unattractive. In any event it is not anything my daughter has ever courted, she has always tried to write well, just that.

I don't know why she and I, both PEN members who have given our time and money to the organization, need to continue supporting unfounded and deleterious statements about ourselves. We would do better to put our money and time entirely into Amnesty International, which is concerned with the needs of the underprivileged and misrepresented rather than the envious and misanthropic. Perhaps others will follow our lead.

—Phyllis Janowitz

[December 1989]

New Leader

In reviewing the recently published *Diary of H. L. Mencken*, the terminally dyspeptic Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. calumniates two American immortals:

I was 15 years old at the time I received *Prejudices* as a Christmas gift. . . . I fell for Mencken at once, with, as in the case of so many devotees, deleterious effects on my own style. We all tried to imitate him and succeeded only in producing the debased Menckenese (the "Prof. Dr." usage, the resort to words like "gaudy" and "boob" and "fugleman" and "swinish") that still drones on today in the prose of Robert Emmett Tyrell [sic] Jr. in the *American Spectator*, all sparkle gone and champagne turned to vinegar; very flat vinegar at that. It took Bernard DeVoto's great composition course at Harvard to comb the Menckenese out of my writing—something that DeVoto, another devotee, never quite accomplished for himself.

[December 11-25, 1989]

New York Times

The historical imagination at work in our times:

The apprehension of Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega on drug charges is largely unprecedented and was basically a blunt political act with only an after-the-fact legal rationale, several legal scholars say.

Some even said that to find a direct precedent one would have to go back more than two millenia [sic]: when the ancient Romans brought back in chains leaders of conquered lands. It is an image brought to mind by the pictures of General Noriega being shackled in the hold of a C-130 aircraft as he was brought to United States soil last week. . . . A senior lawyer at the World Court . . . offered a similar observation. "I can't think of any really good examples unless you go back in history about 2,000 years ago," the lawyer said. "It was like the Romans leading back defeated leaders and taking them to the circus to be displayed."

[January 10, 1990]

Village Voice

The *Village Voice* conducts a guided tour into another literary zoo:

"No. No, no, never."

The question is whether Sarah Caudwell will ever reveal the sex of Hilary Tamar.

"No. I think Hilary is sort of a quintessential Oxford don. I think that's why. I don't really regard Oxford dons as being determined by gender."

In New York for the U.S. release of her third Tamar mystery, *The Sirens Sang of Murder*, Caudwell sits in the pub of the Algonquin, puffing on a pipe, blinking behind the thick lenses of bumble bee glasses and speaking in witty, lockjaw British. . . .

Caudwell—Sarah Caudwell Cockburn, in fact—was more or less born to write such quirky characters . . . Her father was the leftist writer Claud Cockburn, her half-brother the journalist Alexander Cockburn.

[January 9, 1990]

New York

In his justly celebrated TV column, the poet John Leonard distills the essence of all 1960s fairy tales into one droplet of goo, vaguely demented:

In February, *Eyes on the Prize II* devotes an hour to Dr. King, from his opposition to the war in Vietnam to his murder in Memphis; and another hour to Muhammad Ali, from his defeat of Sonny Liston through his joining the Nation of Islam to his refusal of the draft to his vindication by the Supreme Court and his thrashing of George Foreman. Subsequent programs revisit J. Edgar Hoover, Attica, bloody Boston trying to desegregate, Allan Bakke being white at Davis, Miami in flames, Harold Washington—too briefly—triumphant in Chicago.

It all fell apart, didn't it? For a while there, in the mid-sixties, it seemed as if this curve of moral passion would sweep everything before it. We might have looked to ourselves as most of Eastern Europe has looked to us on television the past four months. Instead, we look like savage Romania.

[January 15, 1990]

Free Lance-Star
(Fredericksburg, Virginia)

An enlightened man of the cloth demonstrates that atheism is not always a waste of time:

A few years back, I watched a woman tossing some peanuts over a short guard rail to a gorilla at the San Diego zoo. She tossed them just out of reach of the gorilla. This really frustrated the gorilla to such an extent that he . . . , well, I'll tell you what he did in a moment, but first the application of my parable.

Recently, this nation has seen stories in newspapers and on television about Manuel Noriega, Panama and the Central American drug trafficking problem. All of this "information" that we have received has been intended to give us the impression that our government is doing its best to try and stop the massive influx of illegal drugs into this country.

I am beginning to feel somewhat like the poor gorilla in the San Diego zoo. I am thinking that governmental leaders are just tossing us, the American public, just a few peanuts to make us think there is really something being done about the terrible drug crisis. And these peanuts are being tossed just out of our reach.

Now what did the gorilla do when he got fed up with not being satisfied? He sauntered back to the rear of his living area and then picked up a pile of his gorilla excrement and hit the one who was responsible for his frustration. Hooray for the gorilla!

I am not an animal, especially a gorilla . . .

—Bishop Bill Newton
Fredericksburg

[January 9, 1990]

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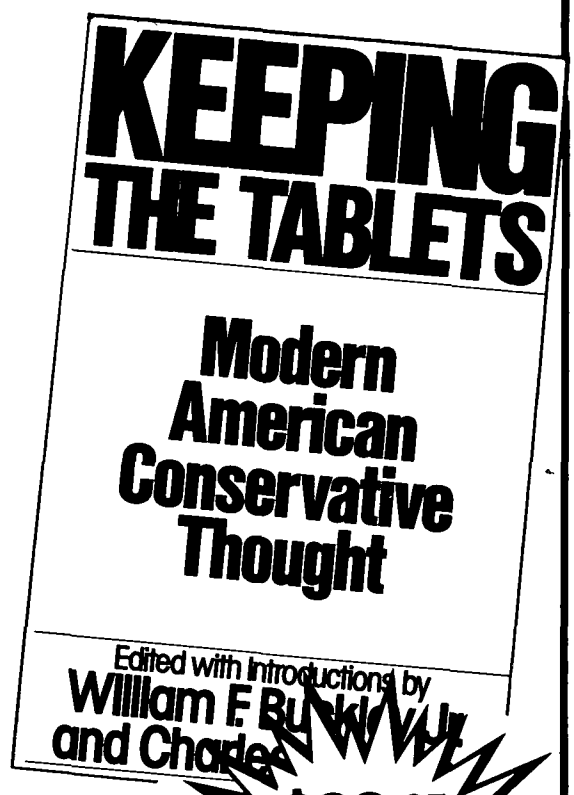

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